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ABSTRACT

In New Zealand, Maori children attend English-medium schools, schools with a bilingual unit, or kura kaupapa Maori. This study identified aspirations and concerns of Maori parents regarding their children's education, identified issues related to parents' participation in their child's education, and developed strategies to address concerns and issues. Participating in the study were 96 parents, 83 students, 27 teachers, and 13 principals or other school leaders from 6 secondary schools, 4 primary schools, and 2 kura kaupapa Maori, all situated near Wellington. Findings from interviews indicated that parents wanted their children to have a better education than they had had. Most of the children knew their parents valued education. Parents and children were much more positive about primary than about secondary school. English-medium schools made children more aware of themselves as Maori, more often negatively. Parents were generally positive about the school's parent involvement efforts. Parent involvement was highest in the kura kaupapa Maori, followed by bilingual-units. Individual teachers' perceptions of Maori students' progress were positive at the primary level; principals were less positive. Secondary school entry assessments found many Maori students lagging behind their peers. The kura kaupapa Maori involved parents and students more in the assessment processes than did other schools. The kura kaupapa Maori parents were most satisfied with home-school communication, followed by English-medium primary school parents. Kura kaupapa Maori parents and teachers were more likely to agree that the child's education should be continued at home, whereas many English-medium and bilingual-unit parents believed that their child's education was the school's responsibility. (Contains 35 references.) (KB)

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Maori Parents and Education
Ko Ngā Mātua Māori me te Mātauranga

Sheridan McKinley

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MAORI PARENTS AND EDUCATION

KO NGĀ MĀTUA MĀORI ME TE MĀTAURANGA

Sheridan McKinley

New Zealand Council for Educational Research
Te Rūnanga o Aotearoa mō te Rangahau I te Mātauranga
Wellington
2000

New Zealand Council for Educational Research
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Wellington
New Zealand

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

This study was carried out to identify the aspirations and concerns of Maori parents/whanau regarding their children's education, identify issues of Maori parents'/whanau participation and non-participation in their child's education, and develop strategies to address concerns and issues, so that gaps between home and school could be positively addressed by Maori parents/whanau, teachers, principals, and boards of trustees.

Maori children attend English-medium schools, schools with a bilingual-unit, and kura kaupapa Maori. Six secondary schools, 4 primary, and 2 kura kaupapa Maori, both with wharekura (secondary level), took part in the study. Two of the 6 secondary schools had bilingual-units, while 4 offered Maori language as a subject; 2 of the 4 primary schools also had bilingual-units. All but one of the schools was situated in the Wellington region.

The field work was carried out between June 1998 and January 1999 by 3 Maori researchers who could conduct interviews in either Maori or English. Each of the 3 was responsible for particular schools and carried out all interviews related to those schools, so each researcher gained a real insight into the issues for each school. Students, teachers—primary and secondary, Maori and Pakeha—and parents were interviewed.

Participants

The parents in the study wanted their children to have a better education than they themselves had had. They believed that a happy child was more likely to want to stay at school and achieve the education needed to get a good job. On the whole, they trusted the New Zealand education system to provide their children with that education.

Most of the children interviewed knew, through the encouragement they received at home, that their parents valued their education.

Parents and their children had similar enjoyment levels of school, but were much more positive about primary than secondary school. The relationship of parents, children, and teachers is perhaps pivotal to student engagement in school activities and success.

English-medium schools appear to make Maori more aware of themselves as Maori, and more often in a negative than a positive sense. Practices such as streaming had evidently made it easier for Maori to lose confidence, and retreat to simply being in the classroom. Maori students did not refer to streaming, but they were conscious of being seen as lesser, of not receiving the attention and support which they saw going to students identified as bright, or "fitting in". This was particularly evident for students in secondary schools, whether English-medium or bilingual; it was not an issue for kura kaupapa Maori students.

School choice was related to parents' perception of the role Maori language and/or culture would play in their child's life. Parents who perceived te reo Maori me nga tikanga as synonymous with education chose kura kaupapa Maori; parents who felt the two overlapped, but remained distinct, opted for a bilingual-unit; and those who chose English-

medium schools either saw an overlap between te reo Maori me nga tikanga, or saw them as completely separate, and even competitive. Some of the latter parents chose non-local schools in higher socioeconomic areas for their children, but had great difficulty gaining entry to them for various reasons.

Bilingual-units were problematic both for parents and schools. In trying to satisfy two groups of parents, schools often experienced resource problems and tensions within the school.

Parental/Whanau Involvement at School

Almost all Maori parents interviewed had some involvement in their child's school, with most attending the parent-teacher interview. Kura parents made whanau hui and kura hui their priority to attend.

Most of the schools were actively trying to reach Maori parents, who were generally positive about the schools' efforts to involve them, and their communication with them. In the abstract, they were not uneasy about raising matters of concern with their child's teacher or principal, although principals of English-medium and bilingual-unit schools did not always feel that Maori parents were in fact comfortable in their school.

Parents were most highly involved in kura kaupapa Maori, followed by bilingual-units. As the expectation of involvement increases, so too does the communication flow between the kura and the home, the sense of support—both ways,and frequently the actual involvement of parents.

Schools which accept the responsibility to encourage parents to become involved—using good, clear, genuine communications—are more likely to get those parents involved with school activities, and communicating more with the school.

Children's Progress

Individual teachers' perceptions of Maori students' progress were positive at the primary level, but school-wide analysis of assessment patterns made principals less sanguine that Maori children were achieving as well as other children.

Secondary school entry assessments found many Maori students lagging behind their peers; the Maori students were less confident that they would pass School Certificate. Teachers gave several reasons why Maori students would struggle—some based on the family, some based on students' attitudes and independence. Parents of secondary students at English-medium schools were least positive about their children's progress.

The two kura kaupapa Maori involved parents and students more in the assessment processes, and teachers at both reported more examination successes, and more confidence in their students. Kura kaupapa Maori parents had more informal contact with their child's teacher and the kura. Informal contact was identified by teachers and principals in all 3 kinds of school as a key to making educators more approachable for Maori parents, and encouraging them to discuss their child's progress, academic as well as social.

The tensions for Maori of living in what has become a largely English, monolingual country were most evident for those parents who had chosen bilingual-units. Their expectations that these units would allow their children to develop equal fluency in both Maori and English were often misplaced. The units themselves were vulnerable, finding it difficult to recruit and keep qualified teachers, and maintain support in schools where Maori were a minority.

School Initiatives To Improve Maori Students' Learning

Some of the study schools were consciously initiating ways to improve Maori achievement. Teachers and principals in English-medium schools were more inclined to incorporate an acknowledgment of Maori culture into their existing programme. Some schools which had set up bilingual-units had struck problems through a lack of teachers and money to resource such programmes. These programmes were perceived differently by Maori and Pakeha teachers; Maori teachers perceived them to be successful, but some Pakeha teachers saw them as divisive in nature, creating a group separate from the rest of the school. This raises questions of how to cater for groups requiring assistance without creating tension in a school by seeming to cater more for one group than another, and how to cater for different groups if equality of opportunity is equated with uniformity, and if resourcing is having to come from funds which are already overstretched.

Kura kaupapa Maori devoted most attention to and made most use of the home-school relationship while not even conceptualising it as such, since the holistic approach does not treat home and school as separate. Motivation and behaviour did not seem to be the problems that they were in English-medium schools, whether or not they had bilingual-units.

Parental Concerns

Most Maori parents have a concern at some stage with their child's education. Some differences related to the kind of school they had chosen for their child. The teacher concerned about a child's behaviour, or not catering for a child's needs, and a child's attitude towards school, were concerns voiced only by English-medium parents. English-medium and bilingual-unit secondary school parents were both concerned with the teacher's behaviour or attitude towards the child, and the poor progress of the child. Bilingual-unit and kura kaupapa Maori parents were concerned with English language literacy of their children, while only kura kaupapa Maori parents were concerned with the lack of subject variety.

The number and type of concerns are a clear indication that Maori parents want to be involved in their child's education. Parents agree that communication is the key to resolving concerns effectively. The group most satisfied with home-school communication were kura kaupapa Maori parents, followed by English-medium primary school parents.

English-medium secondary school parents were more likely to be dissatisfied with home-school communications than any other group.

Home Support

Kura kaupapa Maori parents and teachers perceive the role of the school differently from English-medium and bilingual-unit parents. The education of their child is not the sole responsibility of the school; they understand that they must continue their child's learning at home. On the other hand, while English-medium and bilingual-unit principals would like parents and children to operate in partnership with the school, many parents believe that it is the school's responsibility to teach their child and their role is to support as best they can.

English-medium secondary school students are more inclined than any other group to perceive learning as something that happens at school between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Any school work expected of them beyond those hours reduces their personal time for sports or other recreation. Many students need scaffolding from others in their homework to help them understand what is required of them; once they receive this assistance in a way that they understand, the work becomes achievable.

Home-School Relationship

The partnership between home and school which school principals and teachers value is more readily achieved by activities which matter for Maori. Kura kaupapa Maori are anchored in the community they make with their parents—a community in which the kura may indeed provide the anchor, in which it is distinct, but not separated. In other schools, the work of building a joint community is harder, and rests more on individual teachers' efforts.

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Ngā mihi ki a koutou katoa.

1 INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the key issues for Maori today. There is deep disquiet that Maori educational achievement continues to lag behind that of non-Maori. What quantitative research there is concludes that differences in socioeconomic resources account for much of this gap (Chapple, Jefferies, & Walker, 1997; Nash, 1993; Wylie, Thompson, & Lythe, 1999). There is little evidence that the gap is due to any devaluation of education by Maori (Chapple, Jefferies, & Walker, 1997, 57–60). Yet many of today's Maori parents find it difficult to recall positive experiences of their own education (Hirsh, 1990), and there have been continued expressions of the need for closer partnerships between schools and Maori families and of concerns that school practices often miss Maori students' needs, or fail to engage them and their families in a positive way (e.g., Hawk, & Hill, 1996; Ministry of Education & Te Puni Kokiri, 1998).

This report describes the results of a study designed to improve our understanding of the relations between Maori parents and schools, in the context of their own educational experiences, and their aspirations for their children.

Parents and Schools

What role do parental-school relations play in student achievement? A good deal of the sociological analysis of student achievement shows the importance of a match between home and school in terms of resources and experiences (such as a high value on literacy—and the resources to make that value an everyday reality—language, and structures). Other research shows the value of parent-teacher communications, participation in school events, high parental aspirations, and parent support for learning at home (Desimone, 1999). Research on the processes of communication between home and school has also shown how parents who have experienced educational success themselves, such as middle-class parents, are often more assertive with schools, monitor their child's achievement more, and are more prepared to take the initiative to improve their child's achievement (Lareau, 1997).

> Schools ask for very specific types of behaviour from all parents, regardless of their social class. Not all cultural resources are equally valuable, however, for complying with schools' requests. The resources tied directly to social class (e.g. education, prestige, income) and certain patterns of family life (e.g. kinship ties, socialization patterns, leisure activities) seem to play a large role in facilitating the participation of parents in schools. Other aspects of class and class culture, including religion and taste in music, art, food, and furniture . . . appear to play a smaller role in structuring the behaviour of parents, children, and teachers in the family-school relationship. (p. 714)

Parental involvement in schools has been encouraged as a way to bring school and home closer together, and, particularly in countries which, like New Zealand, have adopted school self-management to make schools more accountable to parents. Parents form the majority on school boards of trustees. Their involvement is sought in school events, such as concerts; in teacher-parent report-backs; in voluntary work, including some assistance in classrooms; and in fundraising. NZCER's most recent national survey of the impact of self-management in primary schools shows that parents who are Pakeha, employed, and have some educational qualification are more likely to have higher levels of involvement in and contact with their child's school, although most parents have some contact and involvement (Wylie, 1999, pp. 164–165). The same survey found that Maori parents were twice as likely as Pakeha parents to have a concern about their child that they would feel uncomfortable raising with their child's teacher, although the proportions were not high (15 percent compared with 8 percent). Maori parents were more likely than Pakeha to want more information about their child's progress than they currently received (27 percent compared with 18 percent), or their child's classroom programme.

There is some New Zealand research evidence that parental involvement in schools, particularly voluntary work, is positively associated with children's achievement at age 8, even after taking income and education into account (Wylie, Thompson, & Lythe, 1999, pp. 125–126). Being known to the teacher and seeing the teacher regularly is also associated with children's performance at school (pp. 88–89).

An earlier NZCER national survey of schools' provision for Maori achievement (Keegan, 1997) found that while lack of appropriate teachers and money were the main reasons principals gave for not providing initiatives specifically aimed at their Maori students, lack of Maori parental support was also identified as a major reason. Parent/whanau groups were the most likely external group to provide schools with support for such initiatives. This earlier survey led to some of the questions that this study hopes to address about the way in which schools seek to involve parents in their children's education.

Research Aims

The main aims of this research were to:

1. Identify the aspirations and concerns of Maori parents/whanau in relation to their children's education.
2. Identify the issues surrounding Maori parents'/whanau participation and non-participation in their children's education.
3. Develop possible strategies for addressing any concerns and issues, so that gaps between home and school can be positively addressed by Maori parents/whanau, and teachers, principals, and boards of trustees.

The main focus of the research was on parents. But parental relations with their children's schools cannot be understood without an appreciation of what is happening in the schools to involve or communicate with parents. The initial research design therefore included a range of different schools, English-medium, bilingual, and kura kaupapa Maori, and interviews with principals, teachers, and parents. After a trial of the interview schedules (March to May 1998) threw up issues such as home support, peer pressure, home-school communication, and the relationship between teacher and student, it was decided also to collect the perceptions of students. Increasingly, value was seen in having these different perceptions and voices brought together to be read side by side.

The Research Design

The research design was aimed at providing "nested" data, about parents, within the context of the school their child attended.

Schools

Previous research on school responses to Maori students (Keegan, 1997; Wylie, 1997) indicated that the schools which were most likely to have introduced policies or programmes to meet Maori students' needs, and to have made particular efforts to involve Maori parents, were likely to be those with more than 10 percent (or so) of Maori students. It was therefore decided to select high-Maori-enrolment schools for the study, and among these, to ensure there was a range of different language programmes, from English-medium only to full Maori-medium schools.

High-Maori-enrolment schools also tend to be low socioeconomic decile.[1] A further reason for selecting mainly low-decile schools for the study was a desire to canvass the experiences and perceptions of Maori from low-income families, since most consultation with Maori about Maori education has had more participation from Maori in middle- or high-income work, or Maori who were already involved in education as teachers or administrators.

Twelve schools were selected as sites for the research: 4 secondary schools which offered Maori as a subject, 2 secondary schools which provided a larger programme such as a bilingual-unit or whanau group, 2 kura kaupapa Maori with wharekura, 2 English-medium primary schools with a bilingual-unit, and 2 primary schools without a bilingual-unit. All but one of the schools were located within the greater Wellington region. Five of the schools were decile 3 schools, 4 were decile 2 schools, 2 were decile 1 schools, and one was a decile 7 school.

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[1] Socioeconomic decile, or "decile" for short, refers to the ranking each integrated or state school has been given by the Ministry of Education to reflect the characteristics of its students. Maori ethnicity is one of those characteristics.

Principals

The principal of each school was interviewed, except for one kura which did not have a principal and operated through whanau decision making, and a secondary school where the assistant principal was interviewed. All the English-medium and bilingual-unit school principals and the assistant principal were Pakeha. The interviews with school leaders covered school policy related to parents, including their concerns, the school's expectations of parental support for children and involvement in school, parent/whanau involvement in the school, Maori parents' concerns raised with the school, and home-school relationships. A total of 10 principals, one assistant principal, and 2 kura whanau were interviewed.

Teachers

In the English-medium and bilingual-unit schools one Maori teacher and one Pakeha teacher were selected, to see if there were any differences in their perception of Maori parental participation in the school. Where there was more than one Maori teacher, the teacher selected was the one who met most of the following criteria:

- active involvement with the Maori community
- responsibility for groups of Maori students within the school
- self-identified as Maori
- between 15 and 30 percent of Maori students in a selected class.

The Pakeha teacher was selected according to the following criteria:

- teaches the same level of students as the Maori teacher chosen
- has between 15 and 30 percent of Maori students in his or her classroom (primary school) or selected class (secondary school).

One of the primary schools selected had 2 Maori teachers who were both very interested in taking part; one teaching in the bilingual-unit and one in the mainstream part of the school. Both teachers were interviewed, and the parents and children from their classes.

The same selection criteria were inappropriate in the kura kaupapa Maori because:

- kura operate with a whanau system whereby parents meet to discuss and make decisions about a wide range of matters that boards of trustees or principals would make in other schools,
- the kura were small schools, with only a few teachers, and either one class at each level, or classes that included several different levels, and
- the medium of delivery is te reo Maori, and tikanga Maori is at the centre of all learning; almost all kura teachers are Maori.

Since the two kura that took part also had a wharekura (secondary level), three teachers were selected and interviewed, one from the wharekura and two from the kura.

A total of 27 teachers were interviewed. They were asked about their expectations of Maori parents in relation to home and classroom support and their strategies to engage

parental support, their communication with parents, Maori parental concerns, and their strategies for Maori students.

Parents and Students

Three children and their parents were selected from the teachers' nominated classrooms. To ensure a range of opinions and views from Maori parents about their support and involvement, the teachers were asked to rate each Maori parent in their classroom in terms of:

- their involvement at the school (good, medium, or little/no involvement)
- their support of their child/ren at home (good, medium, or little/no support)
- their type of relationship with the teacher ("good" relationship, little/no contact, and "difficult" relationship).

The aim was to get one parent who seemed to the teacher to have good involvement and support, one with some involvement and support, and one with little or none, from each classroom (following the method used by Parr, McNaughton, Timperley, & Robinson, 1992). Teachers' perceptions of Maori parental involvement for their class as a whole also provided useful insights (reported in chapter 6).

Addresses and phone numbers of all Maori parents in the classes selected were sought from the principal so that contact could be made. Confidentiality for the parents and children was ensured because the school staff did not know whom we were interviewing.

While most schools felt comfortable with this method, one secondary school chose instead to send a letter to all Maori parents in the selected classes briefly explaining the project and asking them to contact the school if they were happy for their name and address to be given; the response was poor. The school then provided us with a list of names and contact details. The other school chose to send a letter to all Maori parents in the selected classes briefly explaining the project and to contact the school if they did not want their name given to the researcher. Only a couple of parents chose not to have their name and address given to the researcher.

The child was also interviewed. If a parent had 2 children in the teacher's class, both were interviewed.

Table 1

Number of Parents, Caregivers, Whanau, and Children Interviewed in the Study

	English Medium		Bilingual-unit		Kura Kaupapa Maori	
	Parents	Children	Parents	Children	Parents	Children
Secondary school	40	30	7	6	6	6
Primary school	22	22	7	6	14	13
Total	62	52	14	12	20	19

The parents were asked about their goals for their child, any concerns they had with their education, their reasons for choosing the child's school, their expectations of the child's teacher, their involvement with the school, the role they had in their child's

education, the home support they gave, their own educational experiences, and their parents' education, goals, and support for them.

The children were asked about their school experiences, home support, parental involvement, their role in communications between home and school, and their relations with their peers.

All but 5 children were interviewed separately. One child wanted his mother present, and in 2 classes there were 2 children from one family who wanted their interviews together. In these circumstances it was difficult to know to what extent children's responses were influenced by the presence of others. It was also difficult for the transcriber to differentiate between the two on the transcripts. A great deal of effort was required to draw responses from the child who was interviewed with his mother present, and it appeared to the interviewer that he enjoyed making the interview difficult.

We interviewed 66 parents—usually the mother—on their own. Both parents took part in 14 interviews, and in another, one parent and a grandparent. All but 2 interviews were face-to-face, and most took place in parents' homes. The interviews started anywhere between 9 a.m. and 10 p.m. A great deal of effort was needed to contact some parents and arrange interviews.

The student interviews were between 20 and 40 minutes in length; the parent, teacher, principal, and whanau interviews were between 1 and 2.5 hours in length.

Most of the kura students chose to be interviewed in te reo Maori (12 out of 18), as did all their teachers, whanau, and principal. A third of the kura parents chose to be interviewed in te reo Maori.

Each of the 3 researchers was responsible for particular schools and carried out all the interviews related to those schools. This gave each researcher a real insight into the issues for each school.

The Research Team and Analysis

Three Maori women conducted all the interviews. Each was fluent in te reo Maori and could conduct the interviews in either language. Two had previously been school teachers, had taught in kura kaupapa Maori, and had children attending them. Two had previous experience with face-to-face interviewing, and all were very experienced in working with Maori people and communities.

The analysis of the interview material was done by Sheridan McKinley with assistance from Vyletta Tapine. Material relating to each aspect covered in the interviews was taken from the transcriptions, summarised for each person interviewed, and then sorted by group (parent, teacher and principal, and student), and by type of school (English-medium, bilingual, kura kaupapa Maori, and primary and secondary). Apposite stories and quotations were selected to exemplify particular points, or to illustrate the links between experiences and perceptions or actions.

2 PARENTS' QUALIFICATIONS, OCCUPATIONS, AND INCOME

Introduction

Family characteristics and resources can affect parental involvement in schools, and the support parents give their children. The 1999 NZCER national survey of primary schools found that Pakeha/European parents were most likely to talk with their child's teacher about the child's work, discuss the class programme, or help in the classroom. Twenty-two percent of the parents responding to the 1999 survey who were unemployed or receiving state benefits and 10 percent of those who had no qualifications had no contact at all with their child's teacher, compared with 4 percent of all parents (Wylie, 1999, p. 164). The Competent Children longitudinal study of children's progress found that, while parents in the lowest income bracket ($20,000 or less) were just as likely as others to discuss their child's happiness, social wellbeing, or health with the child's teacher, they were only half as likely as other parents to discuss any academic or cognitive problems their child might be having (Wylie, Thompson, & Lythe, 1999, p. 87).

This chapter describes the qualifications, employment, income, and family status, of the parents in the study.

Parents' Qualifications

Most of the parents in this study were aged between 30 and 45. The 1996 Census showed that 52 percent of Maori aged 25 to 45[2] had no qualifications (Statistics NZ, 1998, p. 18). In this study, 48 percent of the parents lacked qualifications. However, kura kaupapa Maori parents often had university qualifications (65 percent, compared with 15 percent of English-medium parents, and 21 percent of bilingual-unit parents).

The decision to enrol their child in kura kaupapa Maori had led to university education for some kura kaupapa Maori parents. Once they accepted the commitment and became a member of the kura whanau, they enrolled in courses to learn te reo Maori if they could not already speak Maori. It was an expectation of the kura whanau that they would do so in order to support their child's language and learning at home, and to be able to participate in the kura or in whanau hui which were bilingual at one kura, and in te reo Maori at the other. Some parents gained the confidence to undertake further study through their participation in Maori-language courses, and their deepening interest in Maori knowledge.

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[2] The 25–45 age-group is used because the published Census tables provide the group of 25–34 years of age, not 25–29, and 30–34.

Table 2

Highest Qualification of Maori Parents

Qualification	English Medium (n = 61)	Bilingual Unit (n = 14)	Kura Kaupapa Maori (n = 20)	Total (n = 95)
No qualifications	35	8	3	46
School Certificate	9	2	1	12
University Entrance	3	1	1	5
Bursary	-	-	-	-
Trade certificate	2	-	1	3
Undergraduate degree or diploma	9	3	13	25
Postgraduate degree or diploma	3	-	1	4

Eight of the parents were currently enrolled in tertiary education courses (4 English-medium parents, 2 bilingual-unit parents, and 2 kura kaupapa Maori parents).

Parents' Occupations

Information was gathered on employment for 84 of the parents: 80 percent of these were in employment; 20 percent received state benefits. Both parents worked in 10 of the 18 kura families, 5 of the 12 bilingual-unit families, and 20 of the 51 English-medium families.

Almost half the kura kaupapa Maori parents were in professional jobs, compared with 15 percent of English-medium and bilingual-unit parents. This seemed to reflect their own parents' employment. Information was also gathered on employment of the parents of 11 of the kura kaupapa Maori parents and 21 of the English-medium and bilingual-unit parents. While these may not be representative of the full parent samples in the study, they show some interesting trends. Seven of the 11 kura kaupapa Maori parents' parents had professional occupations themselves. By contrast, the occupations of most of the English-medium and bilingual-unit parents' parents were unskilled or skilled.

Table 3

Parents' Employment

Employment	English Medium (n = 51)	Bilingual Unit (n = 14)	Kura Kaupapa Maori (n = 19)	Total (n = 84)
Professional	7	3	10	20
Skilled	22	5	6	33
Unskilled	10	2	2	14
Benefit	12	4	1	17

Family Income

The Maori families attending the 2 kura kaupapa Maori in the study were more likely to have high incomes, and less likely to have very low incomes.

Table 4

Family Income

Family Income	English Medium (n = 37)	Bilingual Unit (n = 7)	Kura Kaupapa Maori (n = 15)	Total (n = 59)
Less than $30,000	7	0	0	7
$30,001–$40,000	6	3	4	13
$40,001–$50,000	10	2	4	16
$50,001–$60,000	7	1	1	9
More than $60,000	7	1	6	14

Family Status

Twenty-eight percent of the families in the study were sole-parent families. The 1996 Census figure is 33 percent for Maori parents, indicating that this study is reasonably representative of families.

Sole parents can find it more difficult to get to school, particularly if they have more than one child, and lack transport. Wylie, Thompson, and Lythe (1999, p. 89) found that sole parents of 8-year-olds in the Competent Children study were less likely to undertake voluntary work at their child's school than parents who had a partner at home.

Children attending the 2 kura kaupapa Maori in this study were more likely to be living with both parents than those children attending bilingual-units and English-medium schools.

Table 5

Family Status

Family Status	English Medium (n = 51)	Bilingual Unit (n = 12)	Kura Kaupapa Maori (n = 18)	Total (n = 81)
2-parent	35	7	16	58
Sole-parent	16	5	2	23

Summary

Parents who had chosen one of the 2 kura kaupapa Maori for their children appeared to have more financial and educational resources to put behind their education than those parents in the study whose children were attending bilingual-units or English-medium schools. Resource levels had also been higher in their own families, when they were children. This conclusion needs to be tested against material on the characteristics of kura kaupapa Maori parents and their parents nationwide, since it may simply be a reflection of the nature of the 2 kura kaupapa Maori in this study.

3 PARENTS' ASPIRATIONS FOR THEIR CHILDREN

Introduction

Education features prominently in any recent policy-oriented analysis of "closing the gaps" between Maori and non-Maori (e.g., Te Puni Kōkiri, 1998). It certainly mattered to the parents we interviewed.

What information there is about Maori aspirations in education suggests that Maori aspirations for education and for the use of education are generally as high as others'.

There is some recent research information on Maori students' aspirations, but little on Maori parents' aspirations for their children. Nash (1993, 157–159) found no overall difference between Maori and European secondary students' aspirations for their future occupational level, as reported by their parents, and little relation to social class, with one exception. Maori children whose parents were unemployed had lower aspirations. Aspirations were linked to reading level. Social class was related to aspirations for tertiary education, with the children of professional parents twice as likely as others to be definitely going on to further education. Maori students from the "intermediate" and working social classes[1] were slightly less likely than their non-Maori peers to be definitely going on to further education, but they were also less likely than non-Maori to be definitely *not* going on, or stopping their education with school (Nash, 1993, analysis of table 22, p. 158).

The Wellington region Competent Children study found that around half the parents of 8-year-old children had unspecified goals for their children's future education, and around half wanted their children to have tertiary education. Only 5 percent settled for the end of secondary school (Wylie, Thompson, & Lythe, 1999, p. 99). There were no differences related to ethnicity or income.

Parents' Aspirations

In this study, many of the parents interviewed thought it was important for their children to finish secondary school, and leave with a qualification that could help them gain employment, in a world where qualifications counted for more than they had when they left school. Those parents who had left school with no qualifications all wanted their children to do better than they had done.

The 5 main aspirations parents had for their children's education were:

- to do well in whatever they wanted to do (23 parents)
- to finish secondary school (16 parents)
- to go to university (16 parents)
- to grow up healthy and well-rounded adults (12 parents)
- to go on to tertiary education (11 parents).

There were some differences related to the kind of school attended by children.

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[1] Terms as used by Nash (1992).

English-medium Parents

Twenty-seven of the 51 parents whose children were in English-medium schools wanted them to do well, but had no specific educational goals in mind. Fourteen would like their children to finish secondary school, 11 mentioned tertiary education, and 10 mentioned university.

> [Name of child] wants to be a lawyer. Ever since he was younger, he's always wanted to be a lawyer. I'm not really sure [why]. He'd make a good lawyer, he's always into everybody else's business. If I need to know something, I'll ask him and he'll have the answer, but we know financially to be a lawyer, we're not in a position to put him through university so that's a concern, but at the moment we are concentrating on getting through each year and that's the ultimate goal is that he will be what he wants to be. (English-medium secondary school parent)

> Well in her education, all their education I believe they should be what they want to be, not what I want them to be 'cause then they'll deliberately go and accuse me of umm . . . it's what they want to do as long as they don't want to muck around like [name of another child]. (English-medium secondary school parent)

Bilingual-unit Parents

Bilingual-unit parents' goals seemed slightly less ambitious than the English-medium parents', with none mentioning tertiary or university education. Of the 12 parents, 4 wanted their children to do well in whatever they wanted to do, 2 wanted their children to leave school with School Certificate, 3 wanted them to finish secondary school, and 2 each to know right from wrong, and to grow up healthy and well-rounded adults. There was some ambivalence among some of the bilingual parents about the value of the bilingual option. Some did not believe that Maoritanga was educational and that, at the end of the day, learning to read and write in English was more important.

Kura Kaupapa Maori Parents

Five of the 18 kura kaupapa Maori parents expected their children to attend university. Kura kaupapa Maori parents were trying to fulfil aspirations that went beyond their generation and perhaps the next. Often they felt they had received a reasonable education themselves; what they had missed out on was being Maori. Kura kaupapa Maori parents wanted their children to be truly bilingual and bicultural. They dreamed of an education that gave their children the best of both worlds: te ao Maori and te ao Pakeha. Kura parents were often striving for this type of education even when faced with opposition from their own family.

Barriers to Aspirations

A few parents also identified barriers that they thought might prevent their children from achieving these aspirations. Parents of children in bilingual-units were more likely to identify barriers (5 of 12 parents, compared with 9 of the 51 English-medium parents, and 6 of the 18 kura kaupapa Maori parents). Most of the barriers identified were related to the children themselves: their attitude or ability. Money was also mentioned. Peer pressure was an issue for some secondary school parents who had left school themselves at an early age to become mothers, and did not want their own daughters to follow their footsteps.

Changes in Aspirations Over Time

Half the parents felt that their educational goals for their children were the same as those their parents had had for them. But there were differences among parents in their educational choices for their children. All but 2 of the kura kaupapa Maori parents, and most of the bilingual-unit parents, thought they had the same aspirations as their parents had had for them, compared with a third of the English-medium parents.

This probably reflects differences in educational success. The majority of the kura kaupapa Maori parents left school with good qualifications, and have mainly professional or skilled occupations. Many would not want to revisit their education, in contrast to English-medium parents, particularly those who mostly left school with no or low qualifications, and who had mainly unskilled jobs or were unemployed. When these parents looked back, they would like to have changed their teachers' attitudes toward them, to have had teachers who were more creative in their teaching, and to have improved their own attitude to education.

Some English-medium parents talked about difficulties their parents had in establishing goals for them.

> From what I can remember my parents never really had any goals for us. We were just kids that seemed to happen and life just seems to happen. Yeah so whatever we did just happened. There was no 'I would love for you to do this' or that no real conversations about life in general and for the future. Although my mother now is really good and while she's mellowed she's still strict but she's looking for goals in other people now but I wish she had tried that when we were younger—given some direction. The only direction I sort of picked up on would have been from outside the family, not from my parents. (English-medium primary school parent)

> Well my mum was like, my brother is gonna be a lawyer, and the other one's going to be a doctor. She wanted me to be a nurse, and I was like nah. I want to do what I want to do. Basically, it changed a hell of a lot because she gave us set things, what she wanted us to do, and I'm like if the kids want to do it [they can]. (English-medium primary school parent)

I'm glad all my kids are practically opposite to me, my oldest boy he was really bright, he had a belief in himself and confidence in himself, and that's what I wanted all my kids to have was confidence and these kids have got it and hopefully they haven't been told they're useless and they'll never get anywhere. I can still remember the words my teacher said to me to this day, in fact I've still got his reports. I would never be bitter about it though. I have just accepted it and just hope. My kids are probably too big a part of me. I've liked having them live with me, it is the most best thing that's ever happened to me and I wanna see them do well, that's for sure. (Kura kaupapa Maori parent)

Education Experiences and Aspirations for Children—a Case Study

Here is one father trying to change the path of education for his daughter and provide her with opportunities he never had. In trying to provide this opportunity he identifies all the obstacles to a successful education he experienced: teachers who didn't care, alienation and loneliness as a Maori child, low parent expectation, poor support, and peer pressure. These are all the things he and his wife are trying to make different for his daughter with the help of his mother.

I didn't like it at all at school. I always felt like it wasn't a place for me. I didn't like the teachers and I could tell they didn't like me. I didn't have many friends there either, probably no friends really. . . . Well I was the only Maori. I was also dark. I had no brothers or sisters with me at that [name of primary school]. They had all gone on by the time I started school so I was there alone.

What about teachers—did they help you through it?[4] Like I said they didn't care about me. Well by the time I got to college we had moved and I had other Maori kids to hang out with . . . but you know at the old school they called me Rangi . . . and then they'd get smart and say Porangi,[5] poor Rangi. . . . Well I was older, braver—especially with others like me around. I wasn't the sole brownie any longer and we all stuck together.

Were your experiences with high school teachers better? Nah, they were worse still, like detention givers, the strap and I'm sure it was outlawed by then but we still got it.

Was there anything you liked about being at school? Just hanging out with the boys.

What did you come away with from school? No certificates if that's what you're asking.

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[4] Interviewers' questions are printed in italic type.

[5] Porangi—beside oneself, out of one's mind, mad. Williams dictionary.

Do you recall your parents being involved with your schooling? Other than the sports things when my father would say 'that's my boy.' I don't think they expected much for us from school. We did well in sports and that seemed to please the old man.

Why do you say they didn't expect much? Well we always heard about our cousins in boarding schools like [name of school] and how well they were doing, and they did do well too, they all have flash homes and jobs and all that. It was like they were the ones blessed with the brains.

Do you think brains or opportunity? Well all of it I guess. But we do okay.

What do you want for your daughter from her education? Well we talk about sending her to boarding school because that's what I think was the difference between us and our cousins. I want her to be able to do the things she wants and I know that boarding school has the support from mates and staff. She has lots of things she wants to do and I think that environment will suit her better.

What do you see as your role in her schooling? To encourage her . . . we didn't get that. She's got some expectations of her own and we want to help her to achieve them. I guess my role is working to keep her in the school we decide on so she has the opportunities.

Have you had concerns for her schooling? No . . . she's lucky she's got a great teacher. Her grandmother is there most the time to pick her up and that and the few times I've met her she has been excellent and we talk about my girl . . . if there's anything to be concerned about my mother takes care of it and we talk about it when I get home.

Does she look to you for help with her homework and things? Yeah, I'll listen to her read and she'll come over to me when I'm doing the bills or even if I'm reading something she wants to have a look. Does the same with her mother. We do the shopping together and she likes to take a calculator. I don't know that she knows how to use it properly but she bangs away on it and if I'm not in a hurry I give her some totals and show her how to add them. She comes out and tries to give me a hand in the workshop too.

Have you been to parent interviews? Yeah, her Mum and I, and I wasn't too pleased with the rush.

Is there any other way the teacher communicates with you? Well Mum takes care of that mostly, like the homework book, she writes in it and we read the notes from the teacher too if Mum says we should see them.

What about te reo Maori and tikanga? Well, the old lady's got that and we don't push it. They talk Maori regularly . . . but Mum said she'll teach her, not a stranger, so we didn't expect that from the school.

What do you expect from school? Enthusiasm, show the kids you are there for them—all of them—no favourites and not the bullshit that I put up with. They should know their job well too. I'm sure that my girl's teacher is a good teacher otherwise Mum would say so.

How do you think she'll do in school, what do you think she'll be like when she comes out? Well the hopes are on the boarding school . . . give her a good home life and send her to boarding school to prepare her for the world. I think she'll do fine. She's curious and likes to learn and with the old lady building her up like we didn't get when we were young . . . she's got time these days and she gives my girl every attention she needs. It's her idea that she not go to the local school and I pay for it. So yeah we have expectations of her. It's up to her what the area is that she will get into but I'll be there 'cause I saw it work wonders for my cousins, the opportunities and all.

If you had a magic wand what would you whip up as far as schooling your daughter is concerned? Well just that all the way through we'll be there for her to help her achieve and that all teachers she comes into touch with will be positive . . . she will not have to put up year after year with what I did. I hope she links up with kids who want to achieve or with parents who push them to do well so that she has ongoing support 'cause it's too easy to follow a friend down the path to nowhere and nothing. . . . She's still very young, long way to go . . . we'll see how we get along. (English-medium primary school parent)

Summary

Many parents wished they had made a greater effort while at school. Now that they were parents they were trying to ensure that their children's education was better than theirs, but for many finding the time was difficult due to work commitments. A small number of parents had the support of their parents in raising their child. These grandparents, whose children did not do well at school, tended to view their ability to support their grandchild as having a second chance at what they perceived they had failed at the first time, the education of their child.

Approximately half of the English-medium parents believed that the changes they would have liked for their own education were happening for their children. This was particularly strong amongst primary school parents. Parents' goals for their children were often based on what they had not achieved themselves; these goals were often not specific qualifications or end-points. To be happy was very important because parents believed that if their children were happy at school then they were more likely to want to stay at school and achieve. Parents hoped that their children would do better than they had done.

All the parents interviewed wanted their children to do well at school. They understood that their children could not leave school at the age of 14 or 15 and expect to find employment as many of them had. Parents knew that their children required an education to get a job and hoped that their efforts would be enough to achieve that.

> I know I'd focus more on being educated, I mean you know I was lucky that I fell out of school and fell into a job but you can't do that now so I'd make sure that if he [his son] had his chance again, I'd make sure that he was educated. (English-medium secondary school father who was considered by his son's teachers to be highly supportive, and highly involved with his son's education. His son, who was 17 years old and about to become a father, had just finished school with no qualifications.)

Many Maori parents trusted and continue to trust the New Zealand education system to provide their children with an education that will allow them a future in society. How do we help Maori parents so that the about-to-be father above is not repeating his own father's words in another 15 years?

4 EXPERIENCES OF EDUCATION

Introduction

There is consistent anecdotal evidence that in the past many Maori parents had unhappy experiences in school and have found it difficult to recall the positive experiences. It is unclear to what extent these negative experiences have caused parents to be "hesitant about questioning their schools and other parts of education about what is happening to their children", particularly as the children move to the secondary school level (Ministry of Education & Te Puni Kōkiri, 1998, p. 1).

Clark, Smith, and Pomare (1996, p. 93) suggested that the educational experiences of Maori parents could contribute to inadequate preparation to support their child in their learning, and, rather than the overly trusting attitude indicated above, lead them to a sometimes antagonistic and unsympathetic attitude towards schooling.

Most of the parents in this study attended school in the 1970s or 1980s, in a transition period when there was growing awareness that the Maori experience of school had not been positive, and as the voices calling for a better match between Maori students and schools were growing stronger. One of the questions raised in this study was whether the present generation of Maori parents had had good school experiences, and whether there has been some improvement, albeit gradual. Another issue was to see if the aspects of education which mattered most to Maori parents in their own experience continue to matter for their children.

Parents' Enjoyment of School

On the whole, Maori parents had enjoyed their time at primary school: 44 of the 51 English-medium parents, 11 of the 12 bilingual-unit parents, and 14 of the 18 kura kaupapa Maori parents. But secondary school was a different story. The number of English-medium and bilingual-unit parents who enjoyed school dropped to 30 of 51 English-medium parents, 5 of 12 bilingual-unit parents, and 12 of the 18 kura kaupapa Maori parents.

Enjoyment of secondary school was linked to academic success. Parents who did not like secondary school were more likely to have left school without any qualifications. Of those English-medium and bilingual-unit parents who did not enjoy secondary school, approximately 76 percent had no formal qualifications, compared with 43 percent of those who enjoyed secondary school.

Children's Enjoyment of School

Most of the children in the study also enjoyed primary school. When they were asked what they disliked about it, only a minority described aspects they disliked: teacher behaviour, particularly discipline, and the behaviour of their peers—fighting, hitting, or bullying. A

few English-medium children also mentioned aspects of curriculum and pedagogy, and a couple of kura children disliked their open plan classroom, because of the noise, and the small size of their school.

However, around half the secondary students mentioned some aspect of their school that they disliked. Teacher behaviour was the predominant reason for students in English-medium and bilingual schools, followed by the work itself, and homework. Kura students were mostly concerned about having to learn with younger students, or the small size of their school.

Thus overall enjoyment of school is much the same for the current students as it was for their parents, and we see the same high rate of Maori students finding little to enjoy about secondary school in both generations. Since enjoyment of school was linked to academic success, it was important to find out what parents and children liked about school, and what turned them off school.

Parents' Reasons for Liking School

The main reasons parents gave for liking primary school were:

- the teachers, if they provided interesting work and activities which picked up on individual talents and interests, and if they were kind,
- small schools or close-knit communities, and
- feeling valued because their teacher spoke Maori.

At secondary school, it was also important to have good teachers. Good teachers were those who:

- provided interesting work and activities,
- had a friendly relationship with students, and
- showed that they cared deeply about their students.

Another reason for liking secondary school was:

- their own parents participated in, and felt part of, the school.

But for the majority of the parents the most enjoyable aspects of secondary school were:

- being with friends,
- lunchtime, and
- sport.

Why were these aspects the ones which provided most enjoyment? They were the times in school when the parents interviewed felt safe, comfortable, and able to be themselves as Maori. Unlike their time spent in the classroom, many parents excelled in lunchtime activities such as sports where they felt they performed equal to or better than their non-Maori classroom counterparts.

Small schools, a close-knit community, or a whanau environment were also favoured by both parents and their children. In such environments, teachers, parents, and children mixed socially outside school allowing them to get to know one another on a personal level. Teachers knowing and mixing with parents outside school helped encourage a shared responsibility and greater accountability for student learning.

The Importance of Teachers

Teachers played a major role in determining whether parents liked their school. The relationship between teacher and student was pivotal to many Maori students' enjoyment and success. The importance of the relationship was more obvious at secondary school than primary school, perhaps because there was greater potential for volatility between the teacher and the student. The student was older and having to deal with emotional, physical, and social development while becoming more attuned to issues of equity and justice. Maori students tend not to fare well in disciplinary systems, as signalled by their higher rates for suspension and expulsion, and small misdemeanours can escalate very quickly.

> Some staff responsible for discipline in schools appear to have inadequate skills for dealing with difficulties that arise, and in fact appear to contribute to augmenting the difficulties rather than resolving them (Mitchell & Mitchell, 1993, p. 69).

Traina (1999) explored 125 autobiographies of prominent Americans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These men and women from different social, racial, economic, geographic, and religious backgrounds recounted their educational experiences. He found the same 3 characteristics of a memorable teacher described repeatedly, regardless of the level of education and the subject-matter being taught: competence in the subject-matter, caring deeply about students and their success, and distinctive character.

Hawk and Hill (1996), in their study of New Zealand decile 1 secondary schools with high proportions of Pacific students, interviewed groups of students about things that teachers did that helped them learn. They grouped the qualities and skills of teachers into 3 categories which are not too dissimilar to Traina's: qualifications and subject knowledge, personal attitudes and attributes, and pedagogical knowledge and skills.

Characteristics of a Best Teacher

Parents in this study were asked to describe the best teacher they had at either primary or secondary school. Of Traina's 3 categories, the most important for Maori parents and students was the sense that the teacher cared deeply about them and their success.

Table 6

Characteristics of the Parents' Best Teacher

Caring deeply about students and their success	
Cared, friendly, recognised the potential in children, comfortable	28
Respectful	10
Related to the student	6
Up front, direct, honest, and fair	10
Had expectations of student	2
Encouraged the student	1
Shared personal stories	1
Competence in the subject-matter	
Taught to students' level	8
Knew their subject well	5
Kept student occupied with interesting activities	5
Distinctive character	
Passionate	2

When their children were asked to identify the main aspects of their current teachers that they liked most, the sense of caring, and help, came to the fore.

Table 7

Characteristics of Their Teacher That Children Liked

Caring deeply about students and their success	
Kind	18
A close relationship	11
Funny	7
Rewarded good behaviour, work or effort	7
Competence in the subject-matter	
Provided help when it was needed	15
Provided interesting activities	13
Provided a good balance	7

According to the children, there were teachers at each of their schools who exhibited these qualities that contributed to a positive learning environment for Maori.

As with their parents, the relationship between teacher and student was very important, particularly at secondary school.

> You need some good person. Some person that you trust and like. To help you in the academic way, because academics are not very exciting. You just trust the ones that you like. I like a teacher called Mr [name of teacher]. He's a great man and he's a good teacher. He always tells me I'm a good worker and I've got lots of

> skills. Yea, none of this negative 'cause that's what I get all the time. That's what always makes me get in trouble (Bilingual-unit secondary school student)

Caring Deeply about Students and Their Success

Teachers who encouraged students, recognised their potential, encouraged success, and sometimes went beyond what was expected of them to ensure that the student made real progress in areas of potential were valued. This caring encouragement gave students the confidence to do things that they may not have felt possible. When teachers showed this real interest in the student's academic and social welfare, the student was more inclined to reciprocate with good behaviour and an effort to learn.

Teachers who spent time with all students and not just the clever ones gained great respect from their students.

The relationship between the teacher and the student was very important to the success of the child. Students were more inclined to like the work and therefore engage in learning if they got on well with the teacher, and felt s/he was a friend.

Parents often spoke about their good teachers as one who "came down to their level", but not in a condescending manner. When they were at secondary school, they were no longer children, they were developing into young adults and wanted to be treated as such.

Teachers who were "up front" with their students were mentioned. They were honest and frank with their students about their work or inappropriate behaviour. But this was often balanced with fairness and praise when students did well at school. Parents did not mind teachers who were strict or hard on them provided they were fair, praised them when they did well, or were able to laugh with students.

> He was good, he was strict in some ways, you knew he was upset with you but you could also have a good laugh with him, he was excellent. (English-medium primary school parent)

Teachers who respected students even when they needed to be reprimanded were valued. One parent recalls her secondary school having a rule that no student was to be made to feel "stupid" in front of other students. She preferred to be taken aside to be spoken to about things such as overdue homework; she believed this positive approach was not practised in her child's school.

Competence in the Subject-matter

The ability a teacher had to "come down to the right level" was frequently spoken about by parents. Teaching subject-matter in a way that all students understand and grasp the new learning is important. As adults, many of the parents looked back to their schooling and stated that, while they knew now they were not dumb, they thought then they were because from their perspective they were not given the same amount of attention as

brighter students, they were ignored when they thought it was clear they needed help, they were not chosen to answer questions, and they did not understand the teacher.

Teachers who explained things well without treating students as dumb encouraged students to like particular subjects.

> Maths is my best subject—the teacher is so cool. He really explains things well and talks to us like we're humans. He doesn't talk to us like we're just dumb kids. He encourages success. (14-year-old English-medium student—Pakeha teacher)

Distinctive Character

For a couple of parents passionate teachers were indisputedly the best at getting good academic results. The passion and enthusiasm teachers had for a subject or a topic influenced the techniques they used to teach the students. This in turn caused students to learn more easily and their success created greater confidence in themselves as learners.

Parents' Dislike of School

The majority of parents loved primary school but, by the end of their first year at secondary school, were having difficulty for various reasons, including:

- finding the transition from primary school to secondary school unsettling,
- feeling isolated as Maori,
- not being able to concentrate,
- not being able to do the work,
- not interested in the school work,
- feeling they had to be better than everyone else, feeling they had failed to meet the expectations of parents and teachers, and the standards set by older siblings,
- feeling peer pressure,
- being streamed and losing confidence,
- the behaviour of some teachers, and
- home circumstances.

The behaviour of some teachers was a main reason for disliking school. Being stood up and told off in front of the class caused parents to feel embarrassed; they preferred that the teacher take them aside in situations such as these. Even being singled out to read or spell something became a barrier to their learning. Trying to hide at the back of the class was a common strategy used by parents to try and avoid such embarrassment.

It also seemed unfair to Maori parents if they had been singled out for their achievements; here the unfairness was in terms of their consideration of their peers' feelings. Students liked to be treated the same in terms their public recognition, whether positive—for achievement—or negative—for discipline.

One parent felt if she put her hand up the teacher often chose her to answer the questions over other children. This discouraged other students, and seemed to her an example of unfairness.

A number of parents were made to feel dumb by the behaviour of their teachers. It was not until one parent passed her driver's licence that her feeling of being dumb began to subside.

> Oh some of them were kind but there was also one that was really horrible. She made me feel dumb and all my life I grew up thinking, 'oh I'm too dumb I can't achieve anything.' It was also hard cause I always thought I was too dumb I couldn't attend anything, I mean that teacher had done something up there you know. . . . But education, you know that experience still stayed in mind. Yeah. Then I passed my licence, eh this was easy, and it made me feel good about myself when I got my licence. (English-medium secondary school parent)

If teachers' comments were negative, and the relationship deteriorated, then that also became a block to children's learning.

If parents were not considered to be academic, or were unable to grasp new concepts or information easily, they felt the teacher did not want to spend time helping them and that the academic children received their attention.

Teachers often sent messages that they did not want to be there, that they were not interested in listening to their students. Being ignored by the teacher was interpreted as a form of put-down.

Some teachers' behaviour was perceived as being grumpy and strict. Teachers who stood children up in front of their peers to tell them off, or to use as an example of what the teacher was willing to do if students misbehaved, were not well regarded. Parents and their children both felt strongly and reacted negatively to such approaches to discipline.

Some current students felt that their teacher was unwilling to listen to them, and would dismiss any reasons for not finishing homework. Problems became larger if the teacher applied detention rules inconsistently across children, or, if angry, took their anger out on other students.

Some parents felt they had been picked on by some teachers to such an extent that they felt they were always doing wrong. They believed that they were seen as always doing wrong because they were Maori.

Transition

Some parents had difficulty with the transition from primary school or intermediate to secondary school. The move from the stability of one teacher who knew them well at primary school to several teachers at secondary school upset some. Others lacked the security of having their primary school friends at the same secondary school to help them with the transition. Students often sought the safety of a group of students who had similar needs. Some also found the move from being well known to being anonymous, or from achieving well to simply being average, unsettling.

Feeling Isolated as Maori

Some parents had found out how important their Maori identity was at secondary school. Some who found themselves isolated because they were Maori sought other Maori students to provide them with some solidarity, through Maori club, Maori language class, sports, or just hanging out together at lunchtime—one of the main reasons so many parents liked sports and lunchtimes.

In most secondary schools parents attended, there were plenty of Maori children to befriend in the third and fourth forms, but only a handful remained at school after that. The opportunities to be together were particularly cherished.

> My friends [at secondary school] were mainly Pakeha 'cause I came from the [name of community] and so I had the friends that I grew up with and when I reached fifth, sixth and seventh [form] there weren't very many Maori there, the few Maori that were there, we were close and we did things together and we just had Maori club. (Kura kaupapa Maori parent)

For one parent it was a memorable experience when another Maori family arrived at her primary school. To her they were particularly Maori because of their dark skin colour and the mother's correct pronunciation of Maori words. Their arrival gave her and her sisters strength as Maori children in a community of mostly Pakeha farmers where the children were disrespectful to Maori children and their families.

Parents who were the only Maori or one of the few Maori in the class or school often felt that they were made to feel out of place.

> Just that I didn't like it at all at school. I always felt like it wasn't a place for me. I didn't like the teachers and I could tell they didn't like me. I didn't have many friends there either, probably no friends really. Well I was the only Maori. I was also dark. I had no brothers or sisters with me at that school. (English-medium primary school parent)

Streaming and Confidence

Maori parents felt labelled by streaming which sent the message that children considered bright, who were in the top streams, were Pakeha, and children considered less academically able, who were in the lower streams, were Maori. Streaming prevented one Maori parent from being allowed to learn te reo Maori because she was in a top stream "and the custom was that if you were a bright student you took French. If you were not bright you took Maori."

Those parents who went through a secondary school that streamed all third form students and who did well enough to make the top half of the streamed groups felt isolated as few Maori made it into those classes. Some felt a large responsibility to succeed for all

Maori. These parents were supersensitive about being Maori, as if everyone was watching them and waiting for them to fail. They had to perform one hundred and ten percent.

When students were placed in classes that were predominantly Pakeha, they felt ethnically and culturally marginalised. Some disengaged from learning or assumed a passive learning role.

> Something that sticks in my head is that when I went to the third form at college, you know how you have about 10 classes, and depending on your reports from form 2 they put you into hopefully a group of kids that are similar to your ability. I remember that the class I was in, it was about the middle, but I was at a high level in that class, I was doing really well, so they put me into the top and that was it for me, that blew it, everything went out the window. I was in a class full of Pakeha, there were only 2 Maori in that class 'cause we went to [name of a girls secondary school] and I wouldn't ask any questions 'cause I'd feel like I was dumb asking silly questions, and that was it, my education stopped then. Like I was doing well in there and the teacher was saying to the other kids to come and ask me to help them and things like that just sort of made you feel good and doing ok and that's when I changed and I think I would have done a lot better than I did. May not have been a high standard but would have been better for me, being left there, definitely. (English-medium secondary school parent)

High Expectations

Some parents had difficulty trying to meet the standards—sporting or academic—their older siblings had established at the school. Given that Maori families tend to be somewhat larger than Pakeha, difficulties related to following in older footsteps may occur more often for Maori.

> Because I'm the youngest in the family I always had to live up to their standards and because my 2 older sisters always did well, I was expected to do the same and I hated that. They went to that college, and I really hated that. They would say, we're just your sisters and they were so good, and I think okay, I'm not like my sisters, but I will try and be good, but if it got pushed in my face all the time, then I just rebelled all the time. (English-medium primary school parents)

Home Circumstances

A couple of parents recalled their home circumstances having a negative impact on their enjoyment of school. One parent was the oldest in her family and had the responsibility of helping round the house and caring for her younger siblings.

> I was the oldest of 6 and my job was to look after children, clean the house, cook tea. That was my job, education didn't come into it until my koroua came along, a koroua of my mother's. Mum used to live with him when she was young and then he came back on the scene and he saw what I was doing and he said to my

> mother 'I'm going to send that girl away to boarding school. This was what you're doing to your daughter. This is all she's doing', and so he sent me away to boarding school. (Kura kaupapa Maori parent)

Continuing Issues

Many parents felt that their children were still trying to cope with the same difficulties they had had to deal with when they themselves were at school. The following account shows how these issues are often combined and compounded.

> Because when they're at primary and intermediate they're not prepared for College. College is completely different. They've got so many different classes and so many different teachers they don't know how to relate to them. And it's like a big jump, going from primary to college, when you are at college, you're expected to act like an adult. I mean [name of child] was only 12 when he went to college. (English-medium secondary school parent)

When combined with poor teacher expectations, the first few weeks of a Maori student's secondary school experience can be miserable for both student and parents. The parent quoted above had to visit the secondary school in her son's first week there because he did not have the right uniform due to a miscommunication between her and the school. He was not allowed back till he had the correct uniform; it took her 2 weeks to be able to afford this.

> And also my [older] son was at college and he misbehaved a bit, and his cousins misbehaved really really badly. So they assumed [first name of child] was a [surname of child] he was just like them. So they sort of didn't give him a chance. They didn't treat him as an individual. Every class he went into, 'Oh no not another [surname]'. So [name of child] was put into a category, but [name of child] wasn't like them, he loved school. He did really well at school, so I think in the first 3 weeks, I was called to the school, that he had an argument with the teacher, and for me, they probably think that I was just a parent sticking up for their child. But it was so out of character for him I couldn't believe it. And that's what it's been ongoing, since he's been at school.
>
> They didn't believe me [when she tried to explain that it was out of character], they say parents always say that about their children, you know. I said look, I've got all his reports, you can have a look at those, and I'll bring them in. I said you can go and see [name of principal] at the intermediate. Before moving here we lived in [name of suburb], and [name of principal] he's the principal of [name of intermediate]. He was also the headmaster at [name of primary school].
>
> So he knew him, he knew what sort of person he was, and he knew [name of older sibling], and [name of older sibling] was the same, [name of older sibling's] first week at college, he did nothing but get into trouble. But I mean you can think about it like maybe, you know, peer pressure and all this and getting into

trouble in their first weeks at secondary school. When [name of older sibling] was at school, when he was at intermediate he was fabulous.

There were many similarities in what parents and children disliked about their teachers, even although for many parents it had been at least a decade since they had finished school. Poor relations with teachers, a teacher "putting down" the student, low expectations, expectations that were too high, being treated unfairly, being made to feel dumb, teachers having favourite children and displaying it openly, bright students receiving the teacher's attention, feeling as if they were being picked on, or being ignored, and teachers behaving as if they did not want to work with students, were all difficulties that were often remembered by both generations.

> I've heard it before, if you don't like a teacher, you can't learn. My first year I had a fantastic French teacher, second I had the same one, third year I had a dimwit of a young teacher who just absolutely threw me, so of course I didn't learn anything, I think your teacher can make all the difference. (English-medium secondary school parent)

Changes Parents Would Make if They Were To Repeat Their Education

If they had their time again, the parents in the study would change some teachers' attitudes and behaviour. They would also change their own attitude to school, and take more responsibility for their learning.

Many parents regretted not having a better attitude towards school and learning. They often realised—in adult life—that they did have the ability to learn and succeed at school and that education is important for employment. Some have returned to study in the hope of a second opportunity.

> To be able to sit down and learn. I would like to do it again, now I know what I've missed out on, I'd like to go back and do it all over again and see what happens from there. I know that I wasn't dumb at school, I did all right. It was just me at the time. I wanted to have my own way (English-medium primary school parent)

> I'd change my attitude at High School. Definitely! Yeah, basically that's it. And 'cause I left High School when I was 14 because I was pregnant. So I only had about a year and 8 months at High School. Actually next year I am going to do Correspondence and sort of pick up and try and start again. (English-medium primary school parent)

Some parents would now have the confidence to tell the teacher to move through the work at a pace suitable to them, to ask questions if they did not understand, and to tell the teacher if they felt they were being made to look stupid in front of their peers.

> Oh well, being more mature now um, having the confidence to tell the teachers that you didn't understand what they are talking about. Telling them that they were too fast, they are going too far ahead. Like you haven't quite grasped this, and they are moving on. And they had a bad habit of teaching just to a few kids, who were, who knew, and leaving all the rest of us behind. And you sort of got slotted in little groups aye, when you were in a class. And all the ones who weren't going to learn anything, were way at the back, or the ones who were middle of the road were in the middle row, and all the ones who were clever, were up the front, and they only spoke to them. No, if I had the choice again, I would ask more questions, I'd tell them to slow up, to explain that again. I don't like being put on the spot, that was another thing. The teachers will tell you, oh what's this? Because you're going to be a dummy, I don't know. I have that at Polytech too, with a tutor, and I refuse to answer. I told him, he went round and said do you understand this, do you understand that, and then he picks on you. And when he said to me, I said, I'm not going to give you an answer, and he goes why not, I said because I'm not confident to give you one, off the back. And I'm not going to do it. But you see if I was a kid, I would have looked like a dummy, wouldn't have said nothing, I would just, and they would have moved on. Your confidence is already zero, and you're not going to ask again. (English-medium secondary school parent)

Parents who looked back also wanted teachers to be fairer in their treatment of Maori children and their dealing with issues or behaviour.

> I would sack all those teachers I didn't like or get different types of teachers who wouldn't berate us the way they did, you don't need those teachers, you just don't need them, and all the teachers that I can remember for being supportive and helpful, I'd just double their pay so they stayed. (English-medium primary school parent)

Many parents believed that teachers needed to find more creative ways of teaching students. Their methods of teaching appeared outdated. They taught using the same approach day after day: copying from the board, working from the textbook, or talking from the front of the class. A more varied and active approach, which used group work and provided fun, was what parents wanted.

Kura parents also wanted a greater acknowledgment of Maori students, seeking such changes as the employment of more Maori teachers, and use of te reo Maori.

Summary

There is considerable consistency in the aspects of school which appeal to Maori parents and their children. The aspects which made school and learning unappealing to parents continue to be felt by students, with the exception of streaming, which has become less prevalent in New Zealand secondary schools.

What can we take from this? Maori parents and their children are sensitive to the relationship they have with their teachers. The relationship is perhaps pivotal to student engagement in school activities and success.[6] Kindness, respect, offering help, pacing work to meet student needs, and not singling students out, particularly for misbehaviour, are ways in which teachers can approach their work which are likely to make a positive difference for Maori students.[7]

Schools appear to make Maori more aware of themselves as Maori, and more often in a negative than positive sense. As well as the gap between home and school, which exists for students from homes where parents had little education themselves, practices such as streaming had evidently made it easier for Maori to lose confidence and retreat to simply being in the classroom, in too self-conscious a way to benefit fully.

Just as Maori parents talked of taking to heart the "dumb" label bestowed by streaming and relating it to their being Maori, so they experienced problems with teachers as expressions of their being Maori, of being different, of "not fitting in". Current Maori students did not refer to streaming, but they were also conscious of being seen as lesser, of not receiving the attention and support which they saw going to students identified as bright, or "fitting in". This was particularly evident for students in secondary schools, whether English-medium or bilingual. It was not an issue raised by kura kaupapa Maori students.

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[6] Fielding (1999, p. 22) talks about education as "ultimately and immediately about an encounter between persons", and quotes MacMurray (1949) " We, the teachers are persons. Those whom we would teach are persons. We must meet them face to face, in a personal intercourse. This is the primary fact about education. It is one of personal relationship. . . . We may act as though we were teaching arithmetic or history. In fact, we are teaching people. The arithmetic or the history is merely a medium through which a personal intercourse in established and maintained."

[7] Hargreaves (1999, p. 50) refers to work on the importance of teachers' emotional interactions with students and parents. "Working class and ethnic minority pupils are particularly disadvantaged when care is put on ice by secondary teachers' traditional norms of professional practice and the content-driven rather than pupil-centred structures in which they have to work . . . more open kinds of professionalism . . . that include pupils and parents as well as teachers depend on strong, informal, mutually supportive emotional bonds and connections . . . as well as on value-rational debate, decision-making and inquiry".

Some of the parents and students who spoke with us also wrestled with discomfort that their school success brought them, in the sense of appearing different from fellow Maori. This did not necessarily mean that they consciously underperformed (c.f. Mitchell & Mitchell, 1988), but it did add to their uneasiness in being the minority in their classrooms.

5 SCHOOL CHOICE

Introduction

None of the parents in this study had the option of learning in Maori: kura kaupapa Maori, Maori-medium schools, and bilingual-units did not exist when they were in school. Both options have become more widespread over the last 15 years. By 1998 there were 59 kura kaupapa Maori, including 9 offering wharekura, or secondary education, and 13 immersion schools in te reo Maori. There were 108 bilingual schools, 99 schools with immersion classes, and 221 schools with bilingual classes (Ministry of Education, 98/99, p. 11). In total, 19 percent of New Zealand schools now offer some learning through te reo Maori, although only kura kaupapa Maori and immersion schools (which usually become kura kaupapa Maori) offer that learning wrapped within a Maori-centred environment.

Parental choice of school was also to be widened through the shift to school self-management which began in 1989. While a study into future schooling in Palmerston North (Wylie & Chalmers, 1999, p. 29) found that Maori and Pakeha parents were just as likely to have their child enrolled at the school of their first choice, the 1999 NZCER national survey of primary schools found that Maori parents were almost twice as likely as Pakeha to have their child at a school that was not their first choice (26 percent compared with 14 percent), with the main obstacles being transport, cost, and school enrolment schemes (Wylie, 1999).

School selection of students, rather than family selection of school, appears to be operating against Maori at secondary school level. The Smithfield study (Watson, Hughes, Lauder, Strathdee, & Simiyu, 1998) showed that while Maori parents were slightly less likely than Pakeha or Pacific Island parents to prefer "high circuit" schools (schools with a high average parental socioeconomic status, operating enrolment schemes, with students drawn from a range of localities within a city rather than the local neighbourhood alone), those who applied were less likely to have their children accepted, even when they performed as well as those who were accepted. Acceptance rates for applications to high-circuit schools were 53 percent for Maori, 80 percent for Pacific Island, and 90 percent for Pakeha families (Watson et al., 1998).

Children's Role in School Choice

The Palmerston North study found that Maori students were more likely than Pakeha to say that their school choice had been made by their parents rather than jointly (Wylie & Chalmers, 1999, p. 21). In this study, 7 of the 81 parents mentioned their child had decided or helped decide which school they would attend, 6 for secondary school, and one for primary school. Four parents changed their original preference for Maori boarding school because their children did not want to leave home, although cost also entered into their final decision.

Reasons for School Choice

The study into future schooling in Palmerston North found that parents rarely based their decision of school choice on one factor and that those factors changed with school level (Wylie & Chalmers, 1999, pp. 30–32). Primary school parents' main reasons for school choice were feeling welcome and at ease in the school, proximity, or ease of travel. Intermediate parents made their choice based mainly on proximity, and secondary school parents' main reasons for school choice were related to the subject options available, the school's academic success, the existence of a uniform, good buildings and facilities, and a good mix of students from different backgrounds. Kura parents were attracted by te reo Maori and tikanga Maori, feeling comfortable in the school, and small school size. Fifty-seven percent of the Maori parents whose children were attending English-medium schools were also attracted to schools which offered some classes in te reo Maori.

The parents in this study also gave more than one reason for their choice of school for their child. For parents with children attending English-medium primary and secondary schools the most popular reasons for school choice were:

- The chosen school was closest to the home.
- Other family members were already attending the school.
- The school had a good reputation.
- The parents did not like the other local school.

The most popular reasons for parents whose child was attending a bilingual-unit were:

- They wanted a bilingual education for their child.
- The chosen school was closest to the home.
- Other family members were attending the school.
- The parents did not like the other local school.

For kura kaupapa Maori, the most popular reasons were:

- They wanted an immersion education for their child.
- They wanted their child to learn Maori language and tikanga.
- They wanted to continue what their child had learned at kohanga reo.
- Other family members were already attending the kura.

All three types of parents (English-medium, bilingual-unit, and kura kaupapa Maori) thought that having other family members attending the school influenced their school choice. The location of the school was important only for English-medium and bilingual-unit parents. There was also a clear difference between bilingual-unit parents, who wanted their children taught both languages, and kura kaupapa Maori parents, who wanted all subjects taught through the Maori language. The Maori language and tikanga, and the learning environment and whanau atmosphere which were established in kohanga reo, were important to kura kaupapa Maori parents in making their choice. We turn now to look at how kura embody for these parents a choice not just for their children, but for themselves, sometimes redressing past inadequacies in their own education, and reclaiming education as their own ground.

Why Kura Kaupapa Maori?

Many of the 18 kura kaupapa Maori parents interviewed had only one kura available to them when they were choosing a school. Most could also have chosen a bilingual or immersion unit. But for many kura parents, it was simply a natural progression to move from kohanga reo to kura kaupapa Maori for both their child, and for them as parents. All kura children had attended kohanga reo prior to entering kura. Most of these parents had begun learning the Maori language and culture either prior to having children or at the time that they had them, and therefore kohanga reo and kura kaupapa Maori were the only options for them if they wished to retain and enhance their language and culture. Other parents began learning the language and culture soon after their children started kura, with the encouragement of the principal and whanau.

> Yeah it was a path, it was an option that we found with [name of parent] going to training college and then it, yeah it's a sort of an option that we decided ourselves to take in that we sort of rediscovered our reo and tikanga and things like that. That was a path that we found ok. This is good, so we started with our kids as well. (Kura kaupapa Maori parent)

Some kura parents had experienced mainstream education with older children and decided that they had struggled enough trying to establish bilingual-units in schools where their needs were regarded as minority or different, and that their energy would be better spent establishing kura kaupapa Maori where the whanau would both govern and manage the kura. One kura whanau met for 2 years to establish the foundation of their kura prior to its opening.

> Ko ētehi o mātou kua tukuna ā mātou tamariki ki ngā kura auraki. Kua tukuna kē atu ā mātou tamariki ki aua kura. Ko mātou hoki ērā kua pakanga ana kia tū nga karaehe reo rua i roto i aua kura, engari i kite ai mātou ko te rongoa ko te huarahi kia whakatū kura kaupapa Māori. E tika te kōrero o [ingoa o tētahi mātua], i hui mātou ngā mātua mō ngā tau e rua, i runga i te mea e mōhio ana mātou e ahu ana mātou pēhea, e hoe ana mātou te waka ki hea. Me haere tonu pea ki ngā kaupapa, ko tētehi o ngā tikanga o te kura nei me akō ngā mātua i te reo, me whakapakari hoki ngā mātua i ō rātou reo. Kei te whakahaere te katoa i te kura. (Kura whanau)

Two parents at one kura moved to the area so that their children could attend that particular kura kaupapa Maori. Kura parents also wanted their child to attend a school with their siblings and members of their wider whanau or hapu. In talking about their reasons for choosing kura kaupapa Maori, parents also spoke about the importance of the development of the child within the whanau; the promotion of whanau, hapu, and iwi concepts; the close nature of the student, teacher, and parent relationship; the presence of other family members attending the kura; and an approach which would nurture the mana

of children, and which did not expect them to fit in, but which accepted them for who they were and where they were.

Kura kaupapa Maori children also liked the whanau atmosphere of their kura. The children knew one another well because their kura was small and they were often related. They had a close relationship with all teachers, parents, and students. They were one whanau. The wharekura students also liked students from other schools visiting their kura.

Children and parents agreed that kura kaupapa Maori created an environment and relationship that was not only more personal and relevant for the child as an individual but for the whole whanau.

Many of the kura parents recalled their own negative experiences when talking about why they chose kura kaupapa Maori as the schooling option for their child, things that they didn't like or had missed out on, and therefore didn't want their child having similar bad experiences.

> I know why I did it. I think because of my son being a free spirit. He needed to go to a school like that where they would understand his nature, and because I did my schooling in [name of town], which is very much a Pakeha school. And there if you didn't conform well the first thing they did is put you in a what we call a 'general studies' class . . . where supposedly all the dummies went. When in fact a lot of them were very intelligent. They just didn't conform to the way people would want them to.
>
> Even though I was never in any one of those classes I could see that from a Maori point of view, in order for me to do well at school I had to be a Pakeha. Or I had to, you know, think in and be like that, and that's why I did, and that's why I can't speak Maori, even though I was raised by my nanny who was fluent in Maori. And my grandfather was Pakeha.
>
> We're pushed always to Pakeha and that's why an opportunity like this for my son to do it, to go to a Maori school because it's a fact that anyone that learns two languages achieves more in life. So it doesn't matter whether it's Chinese, whatever, it just opens up the learning more.
>
> So I could see that as being good for [name of child] as well as them being understanding to his nature 'cause sometimes he don't want to listen. And they'll wait for him to listen, whereas in mainstream school they don't really want to wait. If you don't listen well then you're pushed aside. Whereas there, they've got more patience. (Kura kaupapa Maori parent)

The Reality of Choice

Around a quarter of the parents considered other schools before they made their final choice. This is much lower than the Palmerston North study figures (54 percent for primary, and 71 percent for secondary schools, Wylie & Chalmers, 1999, p. 29). In this study, parents tended to look only at the options available within their own local community. The low proportion of parents who did not consider other schools illustrates one of the Smithfield study findings (Lauder et al., 1995) that many low-income parents do

not have as diverse a range of schooling options available to them compared to their high-income counterparts.

Fifteen of the 63 English-medium and bilingual-unit parents considered other schools before settling on their child's school. Thirteen of those 15 parents were secondary school parents. Four of these 13 parents wanted their child to attend a Maori boarding school because they perceived their child would receive a better education or do better than if they attended a local public school.

> 'Cause I thought he needed that, he was so spoilt I thought he needed to, and also academically he needed to go to boarding school, have a bit of pressure put on him. Study as well as learning, I thought he could have got it there but . . . in hindsight not the best decision we made, but at the time he's the baby and we didn't want him to go, well we did want him to go for educational purposes but we gave in, we wanted the girls to go to boarding school too and they didn't want to go either. (English-medium secondary school parent)

> I actually wanted him to go to [name of Maori boys' boarding school]. I told you earlier about my feelings about the kids that have actually gone on to boarding school doing a bit better. Well they seem to me to have done better. And so I would have liked for him to have gone on to there. I chose I suppose not only because it was gonna cost me an arm and a leg but then I talked to one of these secondary school teachers that I know and I was telling his thoughts because my next thought was then ok, I couldn't afford that, so perhaps we'll try at [name of boys' catholic secondary school] 'cause its got a good reputation, so called, I don't know these things. So I let him enrol in there but I spoke to this teacher as I say that I know and felt different about it. My main influence for [name of child] I suppose was to have enough men in his life because we are a separated family, it's just him and I. And men of good influence, not just sort of romantic. I'm wise enough to know that in the world you don't know who's good, bad or indifferent or who's gay or who's not, or guess what. You can only guide them the best you can, you let them make their choices. So we talked about it and looked at the possibilities and I guess because most of his friends whom I was happy with were going to go to [name of current secondary school] at the opposite end because we sort of kept the distance for both. [Name of another secondary school] would have had to make spaces available for us because we were actually gonna move in but [name of current secondary school] was equal distance so we didn't need to. (English-medium secondary school parent)

There were a number of parents who had difficulty trying to get their children into high decile primary and secondary schools. One parent who had moved within walking distance of a decile 9 school struggled to get her 3 children accepted by the school. Although she produced evidence that the children were hers and that she lived within the school zone, the principal still would not accept them, saying that the school roll was full. The children eventually got in 2 weeks after the term had started with the support of her local member

of parliament. They left at the end of the term because the children were very unhappy. They returned to their previous school, requiring transport every day.

Other schools some parents considered were single-sex schools, Catholic schools, private schools, and high-decile schools. Reasons for not attending those schools were:

- the child or family did not meet the entry criteria for the school,
- the school had a long waiting list,
- the parents could not afford to send their child to the school,
- the parents were concerned about their child travelling on trains or buses, or
- the child did not want to attend the school.

> I tried [name of a private catholic primary school] and [name of a private Catholic primary school], but we're not Catholics. No. The list, they take on so many non-Catholics, we would have had to wait too long. (English-medium primary school)

One parent did not want his son attending a Pacific Island-dominated secondary school. This provides an example of a perception we struck several times: desirable education was academic and Pakeha; education which recognised other values was therefore inferior; "culture" was for "brown" people.

> 'Cause I went there. (He did not like it.) And I think [name of a secondary school] has got an appearance of being a Pacific Island dominated college. Well I didn't want him to get influenced towards Pacific Island, cause I'm Pacific Island, I'm Samoan, I think its sort of like, this is my own thinking I was saying to [name of partner], it takes them away from education and into pretty cultural sort of stuff. Yeah it's a lot more white than I think [name of secondary school] is, [name of secondary school] is sort of like brown. (English-medium secondary school parent)

Some of the parents in the sample had 2 schools in their area from which to choose, not necessarily of equal distance from their home. Four secondary school parents and 3 primary school parents mentioned the other school not being chosen for one of the following reasons: bad reputation, too oriented to Pacific Island children,[8] teen suicides, prejudice, or the tu tangata programme.

> For me I thought it was a lot better than [name of another secondary school]. From what I had heard about [name of another secondary school], to me, I didn't believe it was good for children to be forced into learning. There were adult students in the class [tu tangata programme] and to me it seemed like they were intimidating the children to learn. (Bilingual-unit secondary school parent)

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[8] This was a reason given by a Pacific Island parent. See quote above.

When we moved to [name of suburb], I had asked parents of children that I knew went to [name of another secondary school] and parents of children I knew went to [name of current secondary school]. At one stage I heard that [name of another secondary school] was quite prejudiced, they had trouble with teen suicides and that sort of thing and that's why I chose [name of current secondary school]. (English-medium secondary school parent in a school with a bilingual unit)

Mainstream, Bilingual, or Total Immersion?

Some of the parents were within close proximity to 3 schools that between them in the last 3 to 5 years had offered total immersion, bilingual, and English-medium-only options. One of the schools which was in the study had had a total immersion unit which now operated as a bilingual-unit. An inability to attract appropriately qualified staff and parental desire for their children to learn English as well as Maori were the main reasons the school moved from offering Maori-medium only to bilingual. The other study school offered a bilingual-unit. A third school not in the study but within the area had a total immersion unit.

Three of 6 primary school bilingual-unit parents had at some stage of their child's education considered moving or had actually moved their child from one type of education to another. Two parents had moved their children from Maori-medium programmes to bilingual programmes; one parent wanted to shift his child from a bilingual programme to an English-medium programme but claimed that the teachers would not shift the child. All 3 parents moved their children because they were concerned with their child's poor English-language development.

The decision to change from Maori-medium to bilingual education was very hard for some parents. This parent made the decision after considering all that was important to her and her whanau. Maoritanga was not considered "educational" by this parent.

At [name of another local school] I found that [name of child] had her tikanga, her wairua, everything to do with Maoritanga but she didn't have the educational side of things, and that was cool with me, that was fine, so I just continued at home to read to her and we taught her well things that I wanted her to know in English but it turned out that [name of child] got to standard one but couldn't yet grasp reading Maori. She couldn't get the theory side of things but she got everything else and when it came to English 'cause I saw it happen with these kids, they'd learnt Maori and then they just picked up English no problem.

But my daughter never did, and I felt it was because it was very messy to start with within the whole whanau unit especially where the teachers were involved. Not that it was their fault but the teachers that had a lot of experience, they left suddenly all at the same time, leaving a first year teacher to control a whole unit and that is from primer one to standard four and I felt that was way too much for her to cope with, and it showed because other children left. Because I really believed in this in total immersion I stuck at it for my daughter's sake and for my sake, but when she got to standard one, and I saw the whole environment was not

> improving, in fact it was going down hill rapidly, I couldn't leave [name of child] there like a guinea pig, I had to have her educated as well.
>
> But I must tell you something that I agree more with the tikanga side, I feel that if they've got that they'll learn English. So it was a hard one because she was getting that tikanga side but was lacking the Pakeha side but was also starting to lack the wairua side which gives you a balance and that was starting to lack, and that's why I took her out, and that is why she's at [name of current school], and it did take me a while to get her in there because there was a waiting list. (Bilingual-unit primary school parent)

The third parent wanted to pull his 6-year-old son out of the bilingual unit because he was not able to read his brother's English books.

> I pulled him out of bilingual 'cause I felt he was lacking in reading. In reading he didn't know nothing in English at all. So I wanted to move him to learn a little bit 'cause he couldn't read his brother's books and I had a big hassle with the teachers and had to put him straight back into bilingual. (Bilingual-unit primary school parent)

These 3 quite different examples illustrate the difficulty encountered by some total immersion and bilingual-unit parents in choosing the right type of education for their children. All 3 parents began to be concerned about their children's English-language development at a time when the teachers were still consolidating their children's literacy skills in the Maori language. Evidence suggests that literacy skills acquired in one language transfer easily to the other language provided the skills have been well established in one of the languages (Baker, 1996, p. 204). The examples in this study suggest that parents need to be informed of bilingual-language development and what that means for their children and their literacy development in the 2 languages.

One bilingual-unit parent was quite clear that learning Maori was a confidence builder where the child was concerned. Many of the parents did not have the opportunity to learn Maori and therefore considered it to be important for their children. Parents were now learning the Maori language from their children which created a learning situation for all the whanau.

Case Study

This case study demonstrates the difficulties faced by some parents in trying to improve their child's educational options.

> She started off at [name of primary school] and she was in the bilingual class. I think we took her out of there at standard three, four and then we moved both of the girls down into [name of primary school] down in [name of suburb] and that was because she was lacking in the reading and the writing, being in the bilingual class. So I thought well, she's not really gonna get anywhere there, she has to get

> out into a mainstream class. And it's a really good school, I mean they do support the kids right through, so it was a shame that we didn't get her choices to go to college because I think she's just gone backwards in her attitude and things like that.

And why has her attitude deteriorated?

> Behavioural problems at [name of current secondary school]. 'Cause she can do a lot better, lot better now, she can if she wants to but she doesn't try enough. It's the attitude of the whole college, children that she mucks around with. And I suppose 'cause she doesn't like sort of being in the limelight sort of thing, she's that sort of child. She wants to be part of a group, but you know she doesn't want to excel over them. And that's why I didn't want her to go into these schools around here. Because I know that they both can do better.

She tried 2 secondary schools outside her area before finally sending her daughter to her current secondary school because "it was the only school that she could get into". The reason she was given for not being accepted into the other 2 schools was that she was from out of the schools' enrolment zones. However, she believed this was not the real reason because she had observed a number of students travelling to those 2 schools from her area. The real reason?

> I know that [name of secondary school] was getting quite full from children from here [a low-income, mainly Maori and Pacific Island area] so that's probably why they put a stomp on it.
>
> I applied basically because I know that schools here are not very good. The education that they're delivering really and the support that the kids don't get really. 'Cause I know that [name of college] has a home-base after-school programme for their children but [other colleges] haven't.

After her daughter had started in the third form she noticed the advertisements for the targeted individual entitlement scheme.[9]

> I just applied for it because I had thought, seen it in the newspaper they had advertised it for it and I just applied for it which I thought was a load of crap anyway after you know she didn't get accepted.

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[9] The Targeted Individual Entitlement scheme began in 1996 to offer 160 scholarships a year for private school places to children from low-income homes. The Labour government which took office in late 1999 has closed the scheme; existing students on the scheme will continue to get the subsidies until they leave their current school. While Maori applicants were accepted at the same rate as others, Maori were underrepresented on the scheme, indicating fewer Maori applications (Wylie, 1998, 107–108).

After checking that her family met the minimum wage criteria she sent in the application and application fee and was refused. The reason?

> The excuse was that you know it will be difficult for her to start a new school because she's already started the third form. I actually put it for next year, for her to start and that's the excuse that they used. Uprooting her and then putting her into a whole different environment. So that's their excuse for that.

Will she try again for her next child?

> Yeah she'll probably have more of a chance getting there. Well I don't know, I think it's just really who you know. Yeah, I think it's just going on the criteria, what you need to get in there and you need to know it before you actually apply. (English-medium secondary school parent)

With each of the schools she received a letter explaining why her daughter was not accepted and did not at any time contact the schools for more information. In terms of Lareau's (1989) work on the class-based nature of educational advantage, this shows that while Maori parents can take action to ensure educational advantage for their child, and are not passive, they may not always be as assertive or seek information as vigorously as a parent who was more confident in dealings with schools.

The daughter of this parent was desperate to change schools.

> Your mum and dad are saying that you wanted to leave [name of secondary school]. Why do you want to leave college? I just don't want to go back to [name of secondary school] because I can't concentrate properly.
>
> So do you think that by changing schools your concentration will pick up? Yea.
>
> *How will it pick up?* I am not sure but my mum says I should go to [name of another college] because one of my cousins goes there but like they help you more, they help you out, and like they've got after-school subjects, the teachers there help you after school if you need help, more like homework and all that. But I don't want to go there.
>
> *Why not?* I don't know—because my cousin goes there?
>
> *And—what does your cousin say about it?* They think they are cooler than other people. But I don't like those kind of people. But I wouldn't mind going up to college in [name of a town] where my other cousins live.

What's good about that college? I don't know. [Name of current secondary school] doesn't go on any camps or anything until you're 6th form or something. They like go on camps everywhere. I just really want to go on camps and things like that, I really want to change school.

You don't think that when you get to [name of secondary school] you will make new friends and your friends will prevent you from concentrating again? I am not sure. I just feel like changing schools.

You just think that changing will help. Yea. But I'm not too sure if it will. I just feel like changing.

When your mum and dad looked at the other colleges and say they looked at [name of secondary school]. [Name of a private Catholic school] what is it and other schools for you [name of a girls' secondary school] or something like that. What do you think of those colleges? I don't know. I don't want to go to [name of girls' secondary school] because everyone thinks that the girls there are all sluts. So I don't want them to think that I am a slut.

Maori Boarding Schools

A number of parents considered sending their child to a Maori boarding school. Some had had good experiences at one of these schools, and felt their independence had developed. Others had seen other children do well at a Maori boarding school. Some wanted to get their child away from the negative influence of their peers.

I would have quite loved to have sent [name daughter] to boarding school. Not just to get her out of the house, I think that it allows you to have your education as the key as your focus, it allows you to do that but with independence, it provides you with that. (English-medium secondary school parent)

Actually I wanted him to go to [name of boarding school]. I told you earlier about my feelings about the kids that have actually gone on to boarding school doing a bit better. Well they seem to me to have done better. And so I would have liked for him to have gone on to there. (English-medium secondary school parent)

I think they get a better education, they get a better discipline I think, and to learn his Maori culture. (English-medium secondary school parent)

In the end, these parents did not send their children to boarding school because the children did not want to leave home, it was too expensive, or their parents had heard stories about bullying which influenced their decision.

> Just stories I think that you hear from what happens, what goes on when they first start there, and I didn't want that to happen to her. (English-medium secondary school parent)

> Yeah, I mean like we wanted to send them away to boarding school but she didn't want to go, you know, and we couldn't afford to send her anyway. (Bilingual-unit secondary school parent)

Summary

When these parents went to school, the options were largely the local English-medium school, and for those who could afford it or who won scholarships, the Maori boarding schools. Those options remain. New options are kura kaupapa Maori and Maori-medium programmes in other schools, and non-local schools, usually offering a wider or higher social mix.

All of these options attract some Maori parents: or, to put it another way, there is no one type of school which is overwhelmingly preferred. But, with one exception—the choice of higher-decile non-local schools—there is at least some recognition of Maori in the options.

The material presented here indicates a number of different patterns.

- Kura kaupapa Maori appeal to parents who value te reo me nga tikanga Maori as essential to their identity, and to their everyday life. Kura also offered the chance for Maori to be the essence in schools—not to be marginal, or different, or identified in relation to Pakeha dominance. Maori and education are synonymous.
- Bilingual units appeal to parents who are not entirely convinced that full immersion education will equip their children with the knowledge and skills needed in the English-speaking world, but who value their Maori identity, and believe it should be incorporated in some way into their children's education. Maori and education overlap, but remain distinct.
- Maori boarding schools appeal to parents who believe that children gain from making education the stuff of everyday life, by separating it from their own everyday life—particularly their local peers. Maori and education overlap, but only through removal from the home environment.
- Local English-medium schools appeal (or are acceptable—it may be that this is the default option for some) to those who see education as suitably delivered as it was for them; however, Maori parents within this option prefer those schools which welcome Maori, where there are other Maori, particularly whanau, and some recognition of, and respect for, Maori values. Personal relationships are important. Within this option, Maori and education overlap for some, and are completely separate for others.
- Non-local higher-decile schools serving a wider or higher social economic mix of students also appeal to parents who believe that education is affected by everyday life, particularly peers, and who seek traditional education with little concern for

any recognition or inclusion of Maori. Maori and education are not synonymous, but may be opposed.

Maori parents who wanted their child to attend a non-local school had great difficulty in gaining entry. There were a number of obstacles for them, such as not having the knowledge required to make suitable application; not being able to afford the fees, course costs, and uniform; concern for their child's safety when travelling on trains or buses; and not being able to convince the child that it would be a good school for them to attend. Children were often interested in staying with their friends or relations or, if they went to another school, attending one where they had relations already.

The bilingual option was particularly problematic for parents, partly because they were problematic within the schools which offered them. In trying to provide two kinds of education, and satisfy different sets of parent, schools often experienced resource problems and tensions within the school. Parents would find themselves weighing up whether to leave their child in the unit or withdraw them on a yearly basis. They would consider the staffing arrangements, the support of the whanau, and their child's progress. They also considered their child's bilingual development, but within the misleading standards of monolingual development.

6 PARENTAL/WHANAU INVOLVEMENT AT SCHOOL

Introduction

Parental involvement in schools can take many different forms. Soliman (1995) identifies 6 levels.

1. parents support schools at home,
2. school and home communication,
3. schools support parents,
4. parent/community support in schools,
5. school and community links, and
6. partnership in decision making. (pp. 161–168)

Soliman also distinguishes between *involvement* which implies a weaker form of engagement than *participation*, which suggests that parents have a decision-making role in the school in matters of policy, staffing, and the allocation of resources.

One of the aims of the Tomorrow's Schools reforms, which began in 1989, was to increase parental involvement and participation. A decade later, the 1999 NZCER national survey of primary schools found that parental involvement had dropped from 86 percent to 65 percent, with most forms of involvement occasional (Wylie, 1999, p. 83). Maori parents were less likely to be involved in their children's schools than Pakeha, and more likely to say they were not involved because they had no time, or because they would prefer to let the school get on with the job, or they were not comfortable in their child's school. Only mainstream schools were surveyed. Two small kura have been included in this study's sample. This is important because kura are based on whanau participation as well as involvement. Commitment of new whanau to this principle is a prerequisite to entering the kura.

Wylie (1999, p. 86) also found that principals and school trustees of high-Maori-enrolment schools were less satisfied with parental involvement than principals and trustees in other schools. Principals of high-Maori-enrolment schools were twice as likely as others to have difficulty getting help from parents.

The Competent Children study (Wylie, Thompson, & Lythe, 1999) found that 91 percent of the parents of Wellington region 8-year-olds had some type of school involvement. The type of involvement included voluntary work both in the classroom and at the school, irregular contact with the school or teacher, board of trustees or parents' association work, regular talks with the teacher, attendance at school meetings, and paid work at school. The study also found that parents on high incomes were more likely to have some involvement in their child's school than other parents, and mothers who had no qualifications were most likely to have the lowest level of parental involvement. The study

found no differences between patterns of Maori and non-Maori involvement in their child's school.

In this study, when we asked teachers to rate Maori parents' involvement and support, we found that Maori teachers gave higher ratings: 34 percent of parents were seen as having high involvement and support, compared with 22 percent of parents rated by Pakeha teachers. Teachers were rating different parents, the parents of children in their class, and the higher rating by Maori teachers may reflect the greater number of kura teachers among them. Over all, 29 percent of the parents were seen by their children's teachers as having high involvement and support, 36 percent, a medium level, and 35 percent, a low level.

The School Perspective

In this study principals were asked some direct questions about the type of policies they currently had in place relating to Maori parental involvement, to try and gain an understanding about how their schools were responding to Maori parental/whanau involvement and the needs of Maori children.

Inclusion of Maori in School Policy

Most of the principals we interviewed did not identify specific policies related to Maori parental involvement or Maori student achievement. Instead they had general policies for all students and parents such as a complaints policy, an "open door" policy, a community consultation policy, and a policy to establish links with parents, aimed at providing opportunities for parents to be involved, or management policies which addressed guidance and pastoral care. Most of the secondary schools had policies related to the Treaty of Waitangi and marae committee policy or whanau unit policy. One secondary school had an equity issues policy.

Only one English-medium secondary school principal, whose school had the lowest Maori student population, mentioned the Treaty of Waitangi, the school charter, Maori parents, and Maori children and achievement in relation to each other.

This may change with the inclusion of more specific requirements in the National Administration Guidelines from 1 July 2000, which call for the development of policies, plans, and targets for improving the achievement of Maori students, in consultation with the school's community.

Maori Representation on the Board of Trustees

A number of studies[10] of the composition of boards of trustees since 1989 have found that, as Jefferies (1993) puts it:

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[10] e.g., Johnston, M. G. J. (1992). *Maori members on school boards of trustees: Findings from the research.* Monograph 8. Auckland University: Research Unit for Maori Education. Cited in Wylie, 1999).

> . . . there is a tiered effect and a relationship between the proportion of Maori pupils within a school and the way in which those pupils' caregivers find representation at the board of trustees level. In effect, there is a trend that suggests that the number of Maori on a school's board largely determines the amount and intensity of consultation between a school and its community. (p. 36)

In this study most of the schools had difficulty finding Maori parents who were willing to stand for board of trustees elections. Besides kura kaupapa Maori, only one English-medium school had a proportionate representation of Maori board members to the proportion of Maori students in the school.

Table 8

Maori Board of Trustee Members and Percentage of Maori Children

School Type	% Maori BOT	% Maori Children
Primary		
English medium	11	34
English medium	20	48
Bilingual unit	25	33
Bilingual unit	40	73
Kura kaupapa Maori	100	100
Kura kaupapa Maori	100	100
Secondary		
English medium	13	20
English medium	33	33
Bilingual unit	17	38
English medium	10	23
English medium	Not collected/available	33
Bilingual unit	Majority	40

The principal of one bilingual-unit primary school which had a high percentage of Maori students did not believe she had difficulty getting Maori parents to stand or be elected to the board, yet the school still failed to secure a proportionate representation of those born Maori.

> No there doesn't seem to really be a problem [with Maori representation]. I mean we're 80 percent Maori and we've got a 50–50 board but then one of those Pakeha people is married to somebody Maori and has grandchildren so I figure perhaps about 75 percent of the board is Maori or has Maori connections. (Bilingual-unit primary school principal)

Pakeha board members with Maori grandchildren were also considered by other principals to provide Maori representation.

> There is another Pakeha woman on the board who's [name of suburb] born and bred and knows everybody and anybody. She is almost seen as being Maori if you like because her mokos are Maori. (English-medium primary school principal)

The principal of an English-medium secondary school, which was the only school other than the kura to have a proportionate Maori representation on the board, was moving to reconceptualise his perception of Maori identity.

> One who did come [to a curriculum planning hui] was one of the new board members who's half Maori, and she's an accountant. So she's a fully qualified accountant, and I actually didn't know that she is part Maori. When you look at her you don't know that. It's just that at one of our Board meetings, she mentioned that she was half Maori. We actually therefore have 3 Maori on our Board, which is easily the biggest proportion by a long shot. (English-medium secondary school principal)

Maori representation on the board and staff definitely had its advantages. Principals saw the benefits of Maori representation on the board when needing to liaise and consult with the local Maori community or marae, and when establishing Maori-language initiatives. But the initiatives were dependent on having a confident and able Maori board member. Many principals did not believe that the underrepresentation of Maori on their board was a concern. They felt that Maori parents were not interested, or that the board work or the way it worked did not appeal to Maori.

Barriers to Maori representation on the board as identified by the principals were:

- discussing the business of the school may not appeal to Maori parents
- board meetings are not perceived to be Maori parent friendly
- feeling uncomfortable about attending meetings
- not feeling as if they have anything of value to contribute
- feeling that board matters should be left to the professionals, or those skilled in dealing with such matters.

But some schools had plenty of Maori parents nominated.

Questions put to principals about Maori board representation made them evaluate their board representation and Maori student numbers, and some concluded that perhaps parent representation on their school's board of trustees was not as fair as they had thought.

> I think probably we did [have difficulties getting Maori board members]. Having said that though, I didn't really do anything about following that up. I just accepted the nominees that were there and I didn't really push it any harder. At the time I didn't see it as a hassle and I still don't really see it as a hassle in terms of the day-to-day running of the school. But, when I see 50 percent of the kids are Maori and there's only one rep on the board, that doesn't read too well in hindsight now. (English-medium primary school principal)

As with their general approach, the schools in the study did not do anything in particular to try and attract Maori parent nominations. They used the same strategies to encourage any parent to stand for the board of trustees by:

- holding meetings
- sending out posters
- talking to the children about the elections
- informal encouragement
- newsletters asking for nominations

It is unlikely that these methods in themselves would encourage more Maori parents to stand, or make their election more likely.

Whanau Unit Policy

Teachers in bilingual-units and principals of schools with bilingual-units expected more of their parents than those in mainstream schools. They all expected parents to attend whanau hui, help fundraise for annual whanau trips such as a noho marae, and generally be committed to, and supportive of, the type of initiative that they had chosen.

One bilingual-unit had a whanau policy that stated they expected high parental involvement from parents in the bilingual-unit. Monitoring the policy was problematic and it was suggested by some parents that children of those parents who did not commit themselves should be moved out of the bilingual-unit. According to the principal it was highly unlikely and very impractical as that would cause an imbalance in the number of children in classrooms throughout the school. So why have the policy?

> I don't know, I think it made everybody feel a lot better but that was the idea behind it, that parents would be supportive. The reality is as I have said on a couple of occasions, every child in this school gets taught whether or not their parents attend any sort of hui or anything at the school because in fact the school is staffed by professionals, state-paid teachers who teach children and if we never saw a parent from one year's end to the next that would be sad and regretful and not to be desired. But they still get taught so of course children will get an education. It is just desirable that all parents are supportive of their children in this school. (Bilingual-unit primary school principal)

Another bilingual-unit school had a community consultation policy aimed at involving parents at the policy and classroom levels, and a whanau group that represented all Maori parents in the school. The whanau group had a representative on both the board of trustees and the community consultation group.

Kura Kaupapa Maori Whanau Participation Policy

At each kura, we interviewed the whanau rather than the principal or teachers, because the whanau made all the decisions and ensured they were implemented. In other words, the whanau were both the governors and the managers. However, one kura had a principal while the other did not.

Te Aho Matua was the guiding philosophy of both kura. Te Aho Matua aims to provide "a philosophical base for the teaching and learning of children and provide policy guidelines for parents, teachers and boards of trustees in their respective roles and responsibilities" (Mataira, 1997). There are a number of guidelines in Te Aho Matua which related to whanau involvement in kura.

The whanau development guidelines at one kura demanded full participation of whanau in the governance, management, and delivery functions of the school. This kura required parents of the children in the junior school to accompany them on school trips, to accompany their children to kura on Waitangi day and Anzac day, and to attend whanau hui. Parents were expected to enter the kura in all roles including teachers, helpers, facilitators, supporters, administrators, coaches, bus drivers, and relievers. They each had an area of responsibility such as the buses, school uniform, kapahaka group, media, and school evaluation. Every parent was required to set some goals for the year in relation to their support and involvement and then to evaluate them every 6 months at the school evaluation hui.

Parents at one kura were kept informed of their responsibilities and expected involvement at whanau hui and ohu (working group) hui by the kura secretary, who would ring or visit when the kura needed their help, and at another kura by some of the bus drivers when picking up or dropping off children. The buses were also used to transport whanau to kura gatherings.

There were varying levels of whanau involvement in this particular kura, and whanau found full participation hard to monitor. The varying levels of participation concerned some whanau members, but they were aware that some whanau had more difficulty than others in being as fully involved as expected. Parents themselves were aware of their level of involvement. Some decided they would be more involved the following year and some decided that the kura was "not their life". They had "a life beyond kura".

Both kura required parents to attend whanau hui, fortnightly for one kura and monthly for the other. In addition to whanau hui they both had an ohu system. Parents were required to select an ohu to work with. One kura had 5 ohu—ohu whakahaere (administration working group), ohu kura (buildings working group), ohu matapuna (resource working group), ohu arotake (evaluation working group), and ohu whenua (land working group)—which met regularly.

One of the kura monitored parental attendance at whanau hui very closely. After one missed whanau hui, parents received a phone call of concern. The second consecutive whanau hui missed, and they had a letter of warning. After missing 3 consecutive whanau hui, parents and their children could be asked to leave. However, this whanau made their

expectations very clear to parents from the beginning, and the ohu arotake monitored prospective new whanau as they were moved through their hikoitanga (pre-entry stages). The hikoitanga involved stages such as the parent and child attending the kura for 3 days, attending a kura sleep-over, an evaluation of the child in the term that they entered, and whanau discussion and a decision on each new whanau. Their reasons for the hikoitanga:

> There's two main aspects, one that the child wasn't set up to fail, with not enough reo skills to cope, two to make sure our kaupapa wasn't harmed, three to make sure that parents really understood the level of commitment required to be a member of our whanau, because we did have some who came in and then realised this is a lifestyle change and leave, not that there was any bad feeling, it was a learning process, but it was an unnecessary waste of resources and energy. (Kura whanau)

Two of the 9 parents interviewed at this kura moved to this area so that their children could attend the kura. The parents were the whanau and therefore the decision makers, and all decisions required 100 percent agreement before they were passed. Parents at this kura changed their lifestyle so that they could be a part of the kura. They did not want to miss out on the opportunity their children had to have an education that they would have liked themselves. Many of these parents had learnt the Maori language as adults through wananga reo, week-long total immersions, and had attended courses at whare wananga (Maori university). Kura kaupapa Maori were perceived by those parents to be a continuation of the revitalisation of Maori language and tikanga that they had begun as adult students.

Teachers were very aware of the commitment parents made to the kura. One teacher interviewed had parents help her wharekura programme by assisting with curriculum planning, typing documents on the computer, transporting children, washing clothes, phoning people and places that did not have speakers of Maori from their homes (the kura is a Maori-language-only domain, including the office), and proposal writing for the Ministry of Education. Parents remained active in offering their services and asking how they could help, which echoes the kohanga reo process—particularly the pioneering kohanga.

Issues of Separate Policy for Maori Parents

Principals were not keen to have separate policies for encouraging Maori parental involvement in school. They believed that to do so would create a feeling of separatism amongst the students, parents, and staff. Many principals did not believe that low Maori parental involvement was a racial or cultural issue, but a socioeconomic one.

Separatism was of even greater concern among those teachers and principals of schools which had or had had a whanau or bilingual unit. Many Pakeha teachers in the English-medium part of the school perceived the bilingual unit or whanau group as keeping to themselves and not mixing with the rest of the school.

One bilingual unit had created an image that was tough and likened to that portrayed on the movie *Once Were Warriors*.

> Are you aware that we had a Maori immersion class? I don't think it was terribly successful. I think that from observation it's changed over the years. I remember when it was introduced and the idea was that all the teachers involved, they weren't all Maori speakers but they were going to try and use Maori language where they could, and I don't think that ever happened, so I think the students came as a group and stayed as a group, and they got this macho image, a toughie group and they become very difficult, and that's why finally they did away with it, because they felt no one was happy with what was happening. Now I don't think there's any one clear reason why it failed because I think it must have been many contributing factors, but it certainly wasn't successful. I think it would be good if they had a strong sense of identity but I would like it to be not the *Once Were Warriors* image but a pride in culture, in who you are. To me I would like to see a sense of gentler image, rather then a tough image. How you would bring that about I don't know. (Pakeha teacher, English-medium secondary school)

To guard against separatism one principal of a secondary school with a bilingual unit ensured that interaction between the bilingual unit and the rest of the school was maintained by spreading the children in the bilingual unit across 2 school sports houses, and by having vertical groupings and horizontal groupings. The marae complex was used by all the school staff and students for powhiri and other activities.

Not a Maori Issue But a Socioeconomic One?

Many schools did not view the problem of poor parental involvement or student success as a cultural issue but a socioeconomic one. Many principals and teachers sourced poor Maori achievement in poverty.

> After years of teaching Maori students I have to say that the issues I associated with Maori students are issues of poverty and I don't think it is racial characteristics for Maori students, I think it's poverty characteristics. I think that's something that needs to be addressed properly and fully. Where we have tended to say this about Maori students, we mean this about poor people really. When the conditions are different they can have completely different characteristics. I think that's what people need to understand and there's a slight condescending view we should treat Maori students differently. (Bilingual-unit secondary school principal)

> I don't see it [lack of parental support] as being a Maori issue but it coincides with a socioeconomic issue, so I don't see it as purely cultural base, but for people who have been through a school system a few years ago and are not mixing with people who are educated, it's hell of a hard to see the relevance of what they are doing there with their kid in their world and therefore they feel that school is the

ticket to get the job in the short term, rather than a long-term view of education as being something that will really drive the kid forward into the future. (English-medium secondary school principal)

One kura whanau did not believe that poverty was a major contributing factor to the students' learning. While admitting it contributed to some extent, the kura whanau counteracted any impact it had with things such as weekend study sessions and financial support.

> Kāore he tino take o te pōhara o te whānau. Kei te whakapono au ki tērā. Ae he āhuatanga kei reira, kei te pā mai ki tā te tamaiti ako, engari he nui ētahi atu mā te kura, mā te whānau hei whakamāmā i ēra āhuatanga. (Kura whānau)

Thrupp (1999) suggested that educating students from low socioeconomic groups with largely middle socioeconomic students helped lift their achievement. That could be one contributing factor for the success of some low-income students in kura kaupapa Maori which have a good social mix.

The whanau also believed the concern all whanau members had for all children in kura kaupapa Maori to be another factor. The support of the student is not the sole responsibility of his or her parents. So when one child could not afford to pay the fees for a representative sports trip, the kura whanau helped out so that the student continued to have the same opportunities as others, regardless of parental resources. Parents of children preparing to sit external examinations were also expected to share the responsibility of holding extra tuition on Saturdays with all the children sitting exams and not just their own child.

> Ko te taiao i te kura, ahakoa he whānau ake ō rātou i te kāinga, he whānau anō i konei e tauaki ana e tautoko ana. I rongo koe i tētahi tauira i te ata nei, kāore i tētahi whānau te moni hei hari i tana tamāhine ki ngā whakataetae haupoi i roto i ngā hararei, kei konei kē te tautoko, kia taea e ia tana hiahia me tana pai ki te tākaro haupoi, me tēnei kōtiro i tēnei wā e mahi ana, kua whakatūhia he kura hoki i ngā Hatarei, ki te tautoko i ngā mea ākuanei ka whakamātautauhia, ana kāore anō rātou kia reri mō aua whakamātautau. Ana, kei te huri haere te haepapa ki ngā mātua katoa o aua ākonga, kia tae mai mātou i ngā Hātarei. (Kura whānau)

Schools' Aims for Parental Involvement

All the principals wanted to increase the amount of Maori parental involvement throughout their school. They tended to be satisfied with the number of parents who turned up to the parent-teacher interviews, although a couple commented that they did not see some parents whom they really needed to see about their child's progress. Some principals were also satisfied with Maori parents' involvement with sports and their turnout at events such as a concert. Some commented that having a concert prior to a

meeting needing parental input was a strategy that seemed to work. Examples of schools' aims for parental involvement included:

- to encourage parents to feel a part of the school,
- to encourage students to attend parent-teacher interviews with their parents,
- to have parents involved in developing policy, setting curriculum objectives, and developing a vision for the school,
- to have parents involved in sports, trips, and school activities,
- to have more parents involved in the classrooms, particularly in the junior classrooms, with parental activity and helping with teaching and learning,
- to have more parental attendance at meetings,
- to have more parental awareness of education and learning in general,
- to try and establish links with parents and to provide opportunities for them to be involved,
- to have them involved in all levels of the school, and
- to simply be at school all the time.

Parental participation in school decision making was largely confined to the board of trustees in English-medium and bilingual-unit schools. Many of the principals encouraged selective participation by contacting those parents whom they thought could be suitable; only one English-medium primary school principal aimed to change that by encouraging as much participation as possible in all areas of the school, including decision making.

> Certainly there are aims in terms of what we like to see. Just right across the board really, from what they are doing with their kids, on a one-to-one basis and in terms of the amount of input that they have into the policy discussions, in charter reviews and all those kinds of things that are part of the normal development of the school. In terms of that, I don't believe that there is a point when it is too much, so the more involvement you have, the better. (English-medium primary school principal)

One bilingual-unit primary school principal actively encouraged all parents to take part in decision making through meetings, questionnaires, or telephone. On the other hand, the other bilingual-unit primary school principal reflected on her own experience as a parent with parental involvement at her children's school to justify why Maori parents are not expected to get involved with the decision-making activities at the school.

> I'm just trying to think as a parent, like a very middle class parent in a middle class area with kids at school. I went to parent-teacher interviews. I didn't belong to any PTAs of any of my kids' schools. I went to the gala day and spent money. And I think I sewed costumes a few times, you know bits and pieces when they asked, billeted kids but that was all I did. I did not want to be on any committees either. I just figured let the school get on with it. Like I don't want to be on a

committee running my local medical centre, I mean I feel let the professionals get on with it.

That's slightly frivolous. I think there's more to it. I think that a lot of people perhaps don't feel comfortable at those sort of meetings although they are held at school, and it's like everybody's school. The few parents that come to whanau hui do come when they are held at school. I think people just don't feel that necessarily they've got anything to contribute or that it's all right. Yes they don't need to be there if things are going on fine. I think some of it is no news is good news sort of thing. Well I like to think it is. They do come down if anyone is in a real hissy fit about something, they do come down and they come in and they have a moan about things so one tends to feel that if they're not down, then they're probably reasonably happy. They don't come down and tell you when you are doing well by and large either. (Bilingual-unit primary school principal)

Some recognised that having aims and policies is one matter but putting the policies into practice can be challenging and depends on the personnel and their capability to "walk the talk." Each school had tried a number of initiatives or activities related to encouraging parental involvement, strengthening communications, and assisting home support with all parents.

One school took a multi-tiered approach to encouraging parental involvement. They addressed the issue in policy, established groups or systems to carry that policy through into practice, clearly communicated the policy and system to teachers and parents, and held professional development sessions to specifically address ways in which parental involvement could be encouraged. They have not relied upon one programme or one person to do this but on a commitment from a number of staff. The parents get the message that the staff are genuine about their efforts, want to hear their opinions, and have made the place a safe and welcoming one for them.

Well they can only try but I see them trying and trying, I mean genuinely trying to get Maori parents involved but a lot of us are still in the mode that school is not a place for us. (English-medium primary school parent)

Yeah well I think it's good that the school informs parents about what they're doing, what they can offer parents who want to get more involved. I think that's good, even if it's up to the parents to choose then they decide if they want to be more involved or they don't, but they give the parents that option, keeping them informed of what they're doing. The parents would have that input. (English-medium primary school parent)

People at other schools felt it was hard to get past parental discomfort at being in schools.

We would like to have parents in here all the time, I mean we have the open door policy, we do ask them in a questionnaire what they would like from us and I also

call meetings to see what input they would like to have. But for a lot of our parents it's like you know what you're doing, so we'll leave it up to you.

I wish our parents felt more confident or comfortable about being in the school. When I've talked to parents socially, even members of board have said, 'I feel really scared when I come into your office, it takes me back to when I was at school'. I said, 'Well it's a junk room, I've got my son's gumboots in here, and this, that and the other lying around, what makes you feel scared about it?' I mean if we've got board of trustees that feel like that imagine what some of the rest of the parents feel like. It doesn't matter how often you say to them my name's [first name of principal], they call you Mrs [principal's surname], and [name of the Maori teacher] finds it really difficult to have the parents calling her Miss [Maori teacher's surname]. But that's the division that they make no matter how hard you try with some of our parents. I mean we're here for the same purpose as they are so we would like them to feel more comfortable about coming in and talking and just being here. (English-medium primary school principal)

One principal in a mainstream secondary school would like his parents to be involved in extra curricular activities such as sports, and support at home, rather than in the classroom.

I would love all parents to support their kids in extra curriculum activities. So if their son plays rugby or their daughter plays netball, that they might get down there and watch them, two or three times a season. That they might help with the transport of their child and one or two other children. So if they are on a roster basis, all the students can get to the games. I'd like some parent to take an interest in the fact that they've got homework and they've attempted it, and maybe help them to understand what's being asked where they have a problem with that. But to be interested enough so that the child might actually do it. Again, it's just asking that they be interested in their child and show that they are interested. Even when teenagers go through the stage where their answers are "!" and grunt. I mean it's quite hard, I'm a parent and I've had one child that was quite talkative but the other two, you do not get along. But they still know when you're interested and take an interest in what they're doing, and that's important. (English-medium secondary school principal)

But he has asked a Maori parent to come into the classroom on the odd occasion.

The odd time, for example there is one student who happens to be a Maori student, who has caused us major problems with disruption. His aunty has agreed, if he can't get better she is going to have to come into school and sit with him for a day or two. He doesn't want that, he doesn't want it at all. Partly because she's about seven and a half months pregnant and he thought he would be embarrassed. And she is happy to work in with us on this. We've used this technique off and on, but we can only use it when the parent or the caregiver is prepared to do that, and many are not. But in this case this particular aunty is happy to come in. She

made it very clear to him and he believes her, and he's trying his hardest, he's on a daily report system to make sure that he gets a good report, because as soon as he doesn't the aunty is coming in. But we don't have any other formal system where we ask them to come in. We don't have the tu tangata programme. (English-medium secondary school principal)

There were a couple of parents who threatened their children with this action if they did not get on with their learning, but this was the only principal who used parental involvement as a threat.

Established Maori Parent Groups

Two primary and one secondary school had no Maori parent groups. The 3 English-medium secondary schools had a marae committee, and the 2 with bilingual units also had a bilingual or whanau group. The 2 primary schools with bilingual units also had such groups; none of the primary schools in the study had a marae, or a marae committee.

The 2 primary schools and one secondary school which had neither a marae committee nor a whanau group had tried to establish a whanau support group but received little support. One of those primary schools had a kohanga reo on site but it was independent of the school and many of the children went on to a kura kaupapa Maori.

Marae committees tended to get a small group of parents involved, who continually turned up to the different hui for Maori parents. A Maori board member usually attended the marae committee and represented the committee at board of trustee meetings.

Primary schools with bilingual units had a whanau group and also had a representative on the board. Attendance at the whanau group meetings fluctuated depending on the issues, as would the attendance of Pakeha people on boards of trustees or Parent Teacher Association groups. The parents who made up these groups tended to be the most involved Maori parents at the school. Primary schools with bilingual units were more likely to have Maori parents attend their whanau group meetings than secondary schools with a bilingual unit or marae committee.

I had a meeting of the marae subcommittee last night, and there were 6–8 parents from our local community there on that marae subcommittee, and that's probably the keenest group of parents within the school. I wouldn't call it [Maori parental involvement] very good/very high at all. I've taught in 6 schools and I'm looking at the level of support I have had from parents of their students at many of the other schools. I admit that some of our techniques or ways of trying to get Maori parental involvement may not be totally appropriate, like for the meeting last night, I sent a letter home to each of the parents of Maori students at third and fourth form level, and invited them to this hui last night. First section of the letter was in Maori, second section of the letter in English, I said I wanted to talk about their concerns and aspirations and see how we can address them. And no parent came, apart from those who are always on that marae subcommittee. So no other parent came. We had expected that one would, but that's the sort of support

> that we get, when you do it written. And the last time we organised a hui, I had the Maori members of the Board approach people individually, and do a phone tree, and we still got one parent turn up to that meeting. We've only tried the phone tree once, and as it didn't actually generate any more we haven't used it again. I suspect personal contact is the way we've got to go but it is actually very time consuming. (English-medium secondary school principal)

The researchers in this study attended whanau and marae committee hui at some schools to explain the research project and to ask if they wanted to participate. At one hui with a secondary school there were 3 parents besides the principal and the Maori language teacher; at a hui with a primary school with a bilingual unit there were approximately 12–15 parents and teachers, and at a kura whanau hui there were approximately 15–20 whanau members.

Other Opportunities for Parental Involvement

The opportunity most Maori parents took to be involved with their child's school was the parent-teacher interviews. Some schools got a very good attendance rate.

For many Maori parents interviewed it was the one opportunity they tried hard to attend because it was often the only time they heard about the progress of their child.

> . . . parent-teacher interviews which we have once a year in the middle of the year and we get a pretty good turnout, we would get about 80 percent of parents come to those—80 percent plus probably. There are always a few that you would perhaps really like to see and you don't but most people come. (Bilingual-unit primary school principal)

However there are some schools which receive a poor response even for parent-teacher interviews.

> We do plan next year to mail the reports, especially the reports that go out before a meet-the-teacher evening, because we didn't have a good meet-the-teacher evening last week. The reports were given to the students, the students took them home and on the front page there was this information about the evening, but when I phoned a few parents to check, and these were what I would have thought were highly supportive parents, even they hadn't put it in their diary there was a meet-the-teacher evening. Every form teacher is expected to phone all the parents before the event, so they know. But we didn't ask them to do that this time around and so the intake was much lower. (English-medium secondary school principal)

According to principals, activities such as building a playground, fundraising, sports coaching, concerts, sleep-overs, hangi, and helping on school trips received more Maori parental support and involvement than other types of school involvement. Some principals

believed that that was what Maori felt comfortable doing and that Maori did not feel either confident or comfortable with other types of involvement.

Principals and teachers also try to target particular parents for their skills. Once principals and teachers discovered parents with particular skills or experiences, they encouraged them to use those skills or share those experiences at school.

> Carefully because we could scare some [Maori parents] away too, by expecting that that would be one thing that they're prepared to do and just encourage, I mean if you make sure that you show them and value what they have done, and they have got themselves involved and to get them coming, it might be even for little things . . . I know with one parent when we had our noho marae we had a whole lot of rewena bread. So the next 3 weeks I had a rewena bread a week and I felt really wonderful. It never got home, I just left it in the staff room and everyone helped themselves and of course when they were doing technology in the juniors they decided they would do bread making and they hauled her along so they could learn how to make rewena bread, it's little things like that. (English-medium primary school principal)

It is on these occasions that principals and teachers take the opportunity to talk to the parents about their children in an informal way.

> With every opportunity that there is we encourage them to come along to help. At the beginning of the year when we knew the hall was being started we had a blessing out there, parents came along to that, we opened our prefabs, etc. We advertised in the daily rag that we were doing this and parents would come along and be involved.
>
> One of the best things we have done in terms of Maori parents is that I got to the point where I realised that there had been so many staff changes and things and the kawa of the school had, I just assumed everybody knew it and they didn't, so the beginning of last year we had the first two or three weeks re-establishing the kawa of the school and went out to [name] marae for the day and came back and parents did the hangi and a school sleep-over and parents were invited to stay as well but if they didn't want to we just had sports fun, and we had the biggest support from our Maori parents. We sent home the newsletter, who can come and prepare the kai, nobody would answer it but they all turned up, so everybody else came along. I mean we've got ex-pupils' parents turning up with their irons and things for the hangis, things that are particularly pertaining to Maori we get really good support. So we make the most of those opportunities and we just make sure we talk with everybody and let them know how it's coming along. (English-medium primary school principal)

> We've learnt that if you really want the parents along even something as simple as a Board AGM you have their children do something so you say right the senior kapa haka group's performing at this thing but of course what you get are the parents of the senior kapa haka group come to the AGM and the rest of the

> school doesn't bother coming. If you don't have anything with kids you have the Board perhaps one parent and the staff and that's about it. (Bilingual-unit primary school principal)

These are strategies that kura teachers also use in trying to encourage parental involvement. Both teachers and parents at one kura agreed that parental involvement increases when the kura is planning a major kura trip.

Secondary schools do not seem to use this strategy and if they do try something similar it does not meet with as much success.

> Primary schools do tend to attract a lot more in terms of parents coming into the school, helping out, going off on trips with classes. We've tried to get more people into helping out in the classrooms, these education support officers. I did ask the local marae if there was anybody that they could recommend that might be interested, and I've got one person but she in fact has got a job somewhere else, so I mean she didn't take it up but she would have been very good. Otherwise I advertise the positions and we've got one person who is Maori, the other one is mixed Samoan and Pakeha descent, another a Pakeha but married to a Maori guy so with Maori children in the school, so we've got some. (English-medium secondary school principal)

The principals saw the lack of Maori parental involvement as understandable, citing bad educational experiences, both parents needing to work, having preschoolers, and generally thinking about the pressures of trying to get by each day as reasons for some low parental involvement.

> What I really want is to see many more parents in the school. We still don't have enough in my opinion. I'll like to see parents involved in the classrooms particularly in the junior classrooms, parental activity and helping with the teaching and learning. More parental involvement in the sport and the school activities. We have difficulty getting parents come to meetings, I would like that side of it picked up. More parental awareness of education and learning in general, and the only way to do that is I keep talking to them all the time.
>
> I don't like the concept that a school in our decile has no parental interest, a lot of people talk about that and a lot of people will say that. I don't think that is correct, I think parents are shy of a place like us and maybe they haven't been to school themselves or they've had a bad learning experience, that's very common you will be surprised how defensive they are. Ok I want to break that barrier down and so to realise that while we are dealing with a kid on one level, they are dealing with the same kid, and it's a co-operative venture. I've never met a parent, doesn't matter who they are, who doesn't want their kid to succeed. That's the one thing that we always have to keep in our heads. There's no parent who would deliberately stand in the way of their child's success. What I would like to do to increase our children's achievement is be more one on one, be more supportive in

particular to our risk students, more small group work . . . and parents can come in and assist with that sort of thing. (Bilingual-unit secondary school principal)

Principals and teachers find it hard to attract Maori parents to hui to discuss policy, the future of the school, the aspirations and concerns they have for their children's education. Although schools have tried many ways to attract Maori parents, most seem to have failed.

Parent Perspectives

Parental Involvement at School

Almost all the parents we spoke with had some involvement with their child's school.

Table 9

Parents' Involvement at Their Child's School

Parental Involvement	English-medium		Bilingual-unit		Kura
	Primary School (n = 21)	Secondary School (n = 30)	Primary School (n = 6)	Secondary School (n = 6)	Kaupapa Maori (n = 18)
Parent-teacher interviews	14	20	4	3	7
School trips	7	-	3	1	6
Visiting the principal or dean	-	7	-	-	-
Fundraising	6	3	2	-	13
Sports coaching, attendance, transport	4	5	1	1	5
Parent information evening	4	3	-	1	-
Board of Trustees/Parents' Association	2	-	-	1	-
Whanau meetings	1	1	3	2	18
Paid school involvement	1	6	-	1	3
Hui, e.g., tangi, whakatuwhera	-	2	-	1	10
Class help	1	-	1	-	2
Tu tangata	-	3	-	-	-
Building the whare, electricity	-	1	-	-	1
Concerts	-	-	2	4	-
School hui, arotake, curriculum, contract work on resources, whanau development, resource making, Maori language	-	-	-	-	18
No school involvement	3	6	-	-	-

English-medium Parents

Two-thirds of the English-medium primary and secondary school parents attended parent-teacher interviews. One-third of the primary school parents also helped on school trips. Nearly one-quarter of the secondary school parents reported being asked to visit the principal or their child's dean for concerns.

Bilingual-unit Parents

Four of the 6 bilingual-unit primary school parents attended parent-teacher interviews, and 3 parents reported attending whanau meetings and school trips. Four of the 6 bilingual-unit

secondary school parents attended school concerts and 3 parents reported attending parent-teacher interviews.

Kura Kaupapa Maori Parents

All parents reported attending whanau meetings, and school hui such as ohu meetings, evaluation hui, curriculum hui, resource hui, whanau development hui, and Maori language hui. Thirteen of the 18 parents also attended fundraising events, and 10 parents attended hui such as tangihanga and whakatuwheratanga.

All the parents who reported having no involvement in their child's school were from English-medium classes. Bilingual-unit primary school parents were more likely to know what was happening in their child's class than any other group. Two-thirds of the kura parents and half of the English-medium primary school parents also indicated knowing what was happening in their child's class. English-medium secondary school parents were least likely to know what was happening in their child's classes, followed by bilingual-unit secondary school parents.

Kura kaupapa Maori parents were more likely to report that their involvement had made a difference to their child's education. One-fifth of those parents who responded to this question were unsure if their involvement had made a difference to their child's education. Those parents who were unsure were more likely to be in English-medium classes.

About half the English-medium primary school parents (8 parents) wanted more involvement and half (9 parents) did not want more involvement. Thirteen of the 30 English-medium secondary school parents wanted more involvement in their child's education, but 9 did not. Bilingual-unit primary school (3 parents) and kura kaupapa Maori parents (13 parents), who were already deeply involved in their child's education, were least likely to want more involvement than they currently had in their child's education.

Table 10

Types of Involvement Parents Wanted

Parental Involvement	Number
Classroom help	6
Decision making	5
Curriculum	5
Availability of the teachers to discuss matters with them	5
Whanau meetings	4
School trips	3
Homework help	2
Fundraising	2
Sports coaching, attendance, transport	2

Individual parents also indicated wanting to attend concerts, to monitor wagging and supervise homework, to have more involvement with the home-school association, and to have "positive" involvement.

Children's Perspective of Parental Involvement in Their Education

All but a few of the children we interviewed believed that their education was important to their parents. One bilingual-unit primary school student did not believe that her education was important to her mother. Two English-medium secondary school students were unsure if their education was important to their parents because they had not heard them say education was important. Students knew that education was important to their parents because they:

- came to school to help,
- helped with their homework,
- asked about school,
- supported them in their school activities,
- told them that school was important, that they needed a good education so that they got a good job, and
- "just knew".

> She'll come and help me and she says she wants me to get a good education. (English-medium secondary school student)

> 'Cause mum always tries to make me do it, do work. Same with dad, he like tells me to be good at school and that. [Why?] 'Cause I don't think my family went through school. (English-medium secondary school student)

> They always hound us about it. Like we can't miss a day and everything and if we want a bit of compassion we've got to go to school. But it's mainly with dad. Mum's not as strict as dad, but dad's not strict, he just wants us to get a good education. (English-medium secondary school student)

> Because they ask me how am I doing at school. My dad normally does and asks me what I learnt at school. He tells us why he didn't get a good education, because his father didn't help him when he was going to school, and it's important, and you need a good education. (English-medium secondary school student)

> Because they encourage me to go to school and work and stuff like that. (Bilingual-unit secondary school student)

> Nā te mea, ka hōmai a māmā he mahi kāinga ki a mātou. Me mahi kia whakapakari ake ki te tuhituhi, pānui i te reo Māori, i te reo Pākehā. [Because his

mother gives him homework to help develop his skill in reading and writing in Maori and English.] (Kura kaupapa Maori student)

Nā te mea, nā rāua i hari au kia timata ki tēnei kura, ana mai i roto ahau te kōhanga. Nō reira, kia haere tonu te reo Māori ka haere au ki te kura kaupapa Maori. [After kohanga reo my parents brought me to kura kaupapa Maori so that I would continue to learn the Maori language.] (Wharekura student)

Secondary school students were more likely to dislike their parents coming to school than primary school and kura kaupapa Maori students. Embarrassment was the main reason they disliked them visiting school. A few students also disliked their parents visiting school because it was often for negative reasons such as bad behaviour.

However, there were some students who liked their parents coming to their school because it meant they showed support for their learning, it was an opportunity for the parents to see their school work, and for the kura students it was an opportunity for the parents to know what was happening at school.

Communication with Parents

Contacting parents by letters, newsletters, and phone did not encourage [illegible] involvement. Principals and teachers gave numerous examples where they had used these types of communication only to be extremely disappointed by the response. Principals tried breaking up the text on the newsletter, using catchy headlines and pictures, making it a chatty type of newsletter, keeping the language to the ability of a 12-year-old, providing parenting or homework tips. Principals and teachers believed these to be unsuccessful methods because they did not get Maori parents at the meetings. Attendance at meetings was the main criteria used by principals and teachers to judge the success of their strategies.

Newsletters were important to parents because they were used by the majority of the parents as their main method of keeping informed about the school. But secondary school parents often had to hunt their children's rooms or bags for them, or they turned up a week later. If newsletters contained anything urgent, parents would not have time to respond. Even parents considered to be highly involved had difficulty receiving these newsletters on the day they were issued.

Many schools believed that personal contact was the way to contact Maori parents, but few principals had the time or the resources to carry this out. Some deans, teachers, and principals did visit homes but it was only on the odd occasion. This was the method that kura used quite regularly. The staff and parents of the 2 kura also moved in similar work and social circles.

One principal of an English-medium school moved in similar child-focused social circles as the parents of the children at his school, and he found this method of communication very successful.

> Word of mouth stuff is the most successful stuff, face-to-face, it's the only way you actually get their involvement. There are other ways, I mean I communicate with [name of kohanga teacher], the kaiako here at the kohanga reo because of personal things, his boys goes to school with mine, so we tap that section of our community of [name of a community group]. Rugby league, the usual sorts of things. One of the things that I think we do really well here is promote physical activity and sport and stuff like that and our kids are involved in lots of things where you'll get parents to come along. You see people that you need to see at netball, at football, at touch rugby. (English-medium primary school principal)

This was the only principal who saw his parents outside school time or school-related matters. He also offered an incentive to encourage children to get the newsletter to their parents and have their parents read it. Children were encouraged to bring back the slip at the bottom of the newsletter with their parent's signature to go into a draw for a movie pass, MacDonalds meal voucher, or something similar.

Table 11

Parents' Use of School Communication Methods

Types of Communication	English Medium	Bilingual Unit	Kura Kaupapa Maori	Total
Whanau hui	1	5	10	16
School hui	0	0	2	2
Hui Maori	0	0	9	9
Social events	0	0	3	3
Sports activities	2	1	6	9
Go to school	2	2	10	14
When at school for other things would take the opportunity to talk	7	3	5	15
Go to school to talk to teacher	5	0	0	5
Speaks to principal, DP, or AP	1	0	0	1
Parent-teacher interviews	13	3	0	16
Parent information evening	2	0	0	2
Whanau hui minutes	0	0	1	1
Newsletters	17	5	9	31
In touch with other parents	0	1	4	5
Paid school involvement	1	0	2	3
Parent phones the teacher at home	0	0	2	2
Parent phones the teacher at school	4	3	0	7
Teacher phones the parent	2	1	0	3
Notes to teachers	1	1	0	2
Notes to parents	1	1	0	2
School diary or homework book	3	2	0	5

The majority of the primary school children gave the school newsletter to a parent. Only 5 children reported their parent had to search for the newsletter, normally in their bag. One bilingual-unit child would throw the newsletter away.

The majority of the secondary school students also said they gave their parents school newsletters. Six English-medium secondary school students only gave them "important" newsletters; the rest they would throw away. Bilingual-unit secondary school and all kura kaupapa Maori students gave their parents the school newsletter.

Children were another source of parent information and communication about the school. Kura kaupapa Maori students were more likely than any other group to report that there was nothing that they did not tell their parents about school because they knew their parents knew everything that happened at school. All primary school children, and 4 of the 6 bilingual-unit secondary school students also kept nothing from their parents. On the other hand, 13 English-medium secondary school students reported that they did not tell their parents about bad behaviour, getting into trouble, detention, and wagging. One bilingual-unit secondary school student would not tell his aunty and uncle when they owed money to the school; instead he would wait for the letter to arrive from the school.

The next table shows what the children told their parents about school.

Table 12

Children's Communication with Their Parents about School

	English-medium		Bilingual-unit		Kura
	Primary School	Secondary School	Primary School	Secondary School	Kaupapa Maori
Everything	1	3	-	-	7
Their day at school	6	10	2	5	5
Good things, such as prizes, good marks, tests	8	8	3	1	2
Bad behaviour, detention	3	2	-	-	-
Homework	-	-	-	2	-
Nothing	3	7	1	1	1
Not covered	2	1	-	-	3

Parents' Satisfaction with Communication, and Comfort at Raising Issues

We asked parents whether they were satisfied with the communication they had with the school, whether there was any matter they felt uncomfortable talking about to the teacher, and—if they had a problem—whether they would raise it with the teacher or school.

English-medium Parents

The majority of the 21 primary school parents were satisfied with their communication with their child's teacher and felt comfortable talking to them about any matter. All of the parents would raise any problem they had with the teacher or school.

However, the level of satisfaction was lower for the secondary school parents. Only 13 of the 30 secondary school parents felt satisfied with the communication they had with their child's teacher and school. Ten parents were dissatisfied, and 4 parents were unsure. However, all 30 parents thought they would raise any problem they had with the teacher or school.

Bilingual-unit Parents

Six of the 12 bilingual-unit parents were satisfied with the communication they had with the teacher. Two primary school and 2 secondary school parents were dissatisfied, and one secondary school and one primary school parent were not sure about their level of satisfaction with the communication they had with their child's teacher.

Kura Kaupapa Maori Parents

All kura parents were satisfied with the communication that they had with the school, and felt comfortable talking with their child's teacher. All but 2 parents would contact the teacher or school if they had a problem. Two parents indicated that it depended on the issue: if the issue was directly related to their child's learning, such as difficulty with some mathematics, then the parent would not hesitate to contact the teacher; if the issue was not considered to relate directly to their child's learning, such as a kura approaching the whanau to establish them as a satellite to their kura, then they tended to think they would not raise it.

Strategies and Practices Tried by Schools To Encourage Good Communication, Relationships, and Parental Involvement

Principals and teachers knew the importance of good, clear, and genuine communication for the home-school relationship. Once a relationship had been established it was more likely that parents would become involved with the school. Principals and teachers felt it was the responsibility of the school to approach and encourage parents to become involved. Some parents in schools in which had made great efforts to get parents involved were aware of these efforts and accepted it was now their responsibility to respond.

The following strategies and practices were mentioned by principals, teachers, or parents as encouraging greater parental involvement in their children's education.

Principals

- Principal making him/herself available to parents for an informal talk, e.g., road patrol, wandering outside when parents are around, sports meetings
- Professional development on strategies to encourage better communication, relationships, and parental involvement
- Communicating positive information to the parents
- Schools and teachers admitting when they are in the wrong

- A clear policy on community consultation
- A clear policy on resolving concerns
- Policies well implemented
- Strategies implemented at all tiers of possible parental involvement
- An open-door policy actively practised by all teachers, or as many as possible in the school
- Constant communication between the principal and the teachers
- Mailing out reports and other important information
- Utilising events—such as hangi and trips—to talk informally with parents
- An outreach programme which involved going out to parents' homes to meet them
- Continual reflection on communication practices
- Teachers showing they care for the child and the family

Teachers

- Teachers taking on the responsibility to approach parents first
- Teachers showing they care for the child and the family
- Teachers feeling responsible to help the children even if it means saying something to the parents they may not necessarily be keen to hear
- Teachers valuing parents' input
- Utilising events—such as hangi and trips—to talk informally with parents

Parents

- Teachers showing they care for the child and the family
- Mailing out reports and other important information
- Teachers valuing parents' input

There is considerable agreement among principals, teachers, and parents about the aspects that help encourage greater parental involvement in their children's education.

Summary

Almost all Maori parents interviewed had some involvement in their child's school. The parent-teacher interview was the one occasion most parents prioritised to attend, particularly English-medium and bilingual-unit primary and secondary school parents. Kura parents on the other hand made whanau hui and other kura hui their priority to attend.

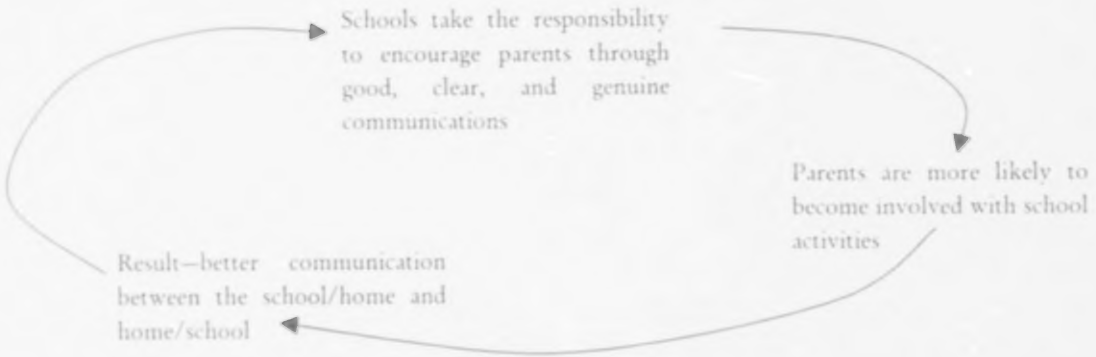
Most of the schools were actively trying to reach Maori parents, although they had no policies specifically for Maori parents and students. Because of their own high workloads, teachers were reliant on the written word, and on students as carriers of newsletters and notes. Strategies that centred on children and their achievements seemed to bear most fruit.

Maori parents were generally positive about the schools' efforts to involve them, and their communication with them. In the abstract, they were not uneasy about raising matters of concern with their child's teacher or principal. Yet English-medium and bilingual-unit school principals did not always feel that Maori parents were in fact comfortable in their school. Perhaps this difference of perception owes itself to the different questions we asked of principals and parents; perhaps principals should explore further what it means to feel comfortable, and whether in fact Maori parents are always assertive when needed, or feel the need to be assertive when principals might feel they themselves would be.

Parents were most highly involved in kura kaupapa Maori, followed by bilingual-units. As the expectation of involvement increases, so too does the communication flow between the kura and the home, the sense of support, both ways, and frequently the actual involvement of parents.

English-medium and bilingual-unit schools are trying to encourage greater parental involvement but it is not specific for Maori at policy level. They are also trying out ways to involve Maori that are Maori specific, but it takes time to build the confidence within the Maori community to get involved with their child's school.

Schools which accept the responsibility to encourage parents to become involved using good, clear, and genuine communications are more likely to have parents become involved with school activities, and communicate more with the school themselves.


Schools take the responsibility to encourage parents through good, clear, and genuine communications
Parents are more likely to become involved with school activities
Result—better communication between the school/home and home/school

Most of the children interviewed knew that their parents valued their education, a message they received through the encouragement their parents gave them at home. It was evident from the interviews with parents that they thought it was important to encourage and support their child at home. Yet teachers and principals often measured a parent's support for the child by how often they turned up to school events or activities. English-medium and bilingual-unit teachers and principals, like their parents, placed great importance on attending the parent-teacher interviews, while kura teachers gave more importance to whanau hui and other kura hui, probably because of the frequency with which they saw kura parents which gave them greater opportunities to talk about a child's progress.

7 CHILDREN'S PROGRESS

Introduction

Parents' degree of satisfaction with their child's education is related to the progress their child is making at school. Parents whose children are doing well appear to be more satisfied with their child's progress than parents whose children are having some difficulty (Wylie, 1999; Nash, Harker, & Charters, 1990). Nash, Harker, and Charters (1990, p. 33) found that parents have different expectations of what their child should achieve and as a result different levels of satisfaction with their progress. Professional parents were not particularly satisfied with their child's reading unless they were close to the seventieth percentile; these parents were also very likely to take some sort of action to raise their child's level of performance. On the other hand, working class parents were likely to be very satisfied with their child's progress if they were about average in their reading performance. The differences in level of satisfaction were not just class specific but ethnically specific as well. The number of Maori parents "very satisfied" with their child's progress was proportionate to non-Maori but they were satisfied with lower levels of attainment.

In the Nash, Harker, and Charters study (1990), 7 of the 23 Maori parents who expressed dissatisfaction with their child's progress thought that the problem was with the child rather than the school. The same study (p. 34) reported that most of the other Maori parents had approached the school, but 8 did not think they could do anything to resolve their concerns. Non-Maori parents were slightly less likely to believe the problem lay with their child, or to believe they could do nothing to improve the situation.

School Views

In this study, about half the teachers, both Maori and Pakeha, thought that their Maori parents did not raise concerns about their child's progress with them. They reported that parents tended to raise issues of behaviour (such as whether children were behaving well at school, and bullying), health (such as headlice, and whether children ate all their lunch), and money for school books and activities.

Other teachers did not believe that Maori parents raised different concerns from non-Maori parents; some reported that Maori parents also raised academic concerns with them. Kura kaupapa Maori teachers did not know whether the concerns Maori parents raised were any different from non-Maori because they had not experienced teaching many non-Maori children.

All the primary school principals reported that Maori parents were less inclined to raise academic concerns than other groups of parents and that they tended to raise issues of bullying and behaviour. The bilingual-unit teacher and principal at one school reported parents raising concerns for their children's English-language development. Parents at the

other bilingual-unit school questioned the spending of the Maori-language-factor funding. Some principals and teachers mentioned that they were aware that Maori parents wanted their children to do well, to achieve, and to have more opportunities than the parents themselves had had.

Secondary principals and teachers said that Maori parents' concerns were both academic and behavioural. They also tended to be concerned about their inability to pay for external examinations, trips, uniforms, and school activities.

The Importance of Approachability

Many of the Maori and Pakeha teachers and principals thought that making themselves approachable was the key to Maori parents' raising concerns with them, including concerns about their child's progress. Ways in which they made themselves approachable included:

- walking around in the playground so that their children's parents could speak with them if they wanted, particularly before and after school
- coaching school sports teams
- holding and attending whanau hui so that parents and teachers became more comfortable with one another
- being good humoured, and light-hearted
- being friendly and up-front
- mixing in the same social circles as Maori parents
- responding quickly to Maori parents' calls or requests
- writing friendly notes home to parents
- visiting parents at their home
- ringing parents at home
- advertising in newsletters and enrolment packages that the school has an open-door policy
- encouraging parents to come into school to help with activities
- listening when parents do come in to school
- encouraging parents at parent-teacher interviews to contact the school
- giving out their home phone number.

The situations in which Maori parents were most likely to raise concerns about their child's progress were at informal situations such as at sporting events, social outings, informal hui, whanau hui, and in other informal situations where they were one-on-one with their child's teacher.

Primary School Teachers' Perceptions of Maori Children's Progress in Their Class

All the primary school teachers described a similar pattern of progress for the Maori children in their class. The majority of the Maori children were reading at their chronological age with a few above and a few below.

> There are two that are reading above their chronological age, 4 that are reading below and 4 that are average. But when I say that, it's very hard for me to know, working in this school, I don't actually know what average is. I know for our school and I know this girl is reading at a 10-year-old age level and I know [name of child] is also reading at an age above her. I'm not sure whether these kids would be considered as being average. (English-medium Pakeha primary school teacher of years 3 and 4)

> Well none of them are on special programmes or getting extra help, so they are all achieving in the middle area. They are working about where they should be. Perhaps a couple of them are working slightly below in maths. They're all bright and the language is quite good. Most of them are quite good. (English-medium Pakeha primary school teacher of years 3 and 4)

> Overall very good. Probably three-quarters of them [would be reading at their chronological age]. My highest groups in maths and reading are 75 percent Maori and the other 25 percent would be Samoan and Pakeha. I've got some really good achievers, Maori achievers. Only a few [are reading below their age]. (English-medium Maori primary school teacher of years 5 and 6)

Most of the teachers were comparing their children with others in their school and did not know how they were progressing in comparison with children in other schools. When they used words such as "average" and "middle area", it was not clear what benchmarks they were using in making such statements.

Principals' Perceptions of Maori Children's Progress in Their Schools

Information about Maori children's progress varied; at some schools the principals were just beginning to establish some school-wide mechanisms for tracking children's progress throughout their time at school. But on the whole the schools were using assessment data to gauge children's learning needs at earlier stages, and to use the data to plan teaching emphases for whole classes.

One English-medium primary school principal in a school with 45 percent Maori had begun collecting school-wide data which gave a less sanguine picture than classroom teachers reported for their individual classes. Forty-five percent of the Maori children in this school were reading below their chronological age. Of these, half were less than 1 year below and half were more than 1 year below. The school had identified at the new entrant level a need to boost the oral language ability of Maori children.

> As they come in as 5-year-olds they're assessed, for a lot of our kids it's oral language, and that's where the parents should be coming in at the preschool level, that whole oral language development, that being able to communicate. (English-medium primary school principal)

One teacher is responsible for assessing the children on entry using a test she developed herself, and establishing an oral language programme for them, sometimes using a teacher specialising in working with children whose first language is not English.

> The new entrant programme is based on improving communication skills in order to then teach them to read. We feel that for a lot of kids reading recovery is too soon; it should be at 7 because they haven't developed the skills to read properly at 6. As a 7-year-old they may well do it better. (English-medium primary school principal)

This principal also developed her own mathematics test for year 4, based on the staff's view of what they expected students to be able to do by the end of year 4.

> I tested some year 3, a whole part of year 4s and year 5s and got a range of results. The trouble is, it's not scientific. It did show that our Maori kids were not achieving. We've got some of our Maori kids at the top of the pile, and teachers seem to think, 'Oh these kids are doing well' and they forget the majority of them are not. It worries me. (English-medium primary school principal)

There was a small proportion of Maori children who were doing really well, but the principal expressed the view that some would not reach their potential unless it was recognised and they received financial assistance to attend a good secondary school.

> We've got some kids with tons of ability and talent and somehow someone needs to be able to recognise that talent. [Name of parent] that came in before was a counsellor who wants to get her [referring to a child who had just left the room] into boarding school, she could get a scholarship, she's academically very bright so we're trying to access ways for her to get an academic scholarship as well as through the iwi. (English-medium primary school principal)

At the other English-medium primary school, which has begun to develop standards-based assessment for a number of curriculum areas, the principal was reluctant to assess the children's progress against all the curriculum objectives because he believed it involved "trying to put round pegs into square holes".

> In terms of the wider issues of the progress of the Maori kids and stuff like that she's [the one Maori board member] not kind of switched into that, yet. But neither have I been really. I've just started to get into gathering data about how kids are progressing. I don't necessarily believe that we should be jumping our kids through some of these performance objectives that are being set for us. Even though I've had a nice gentle growling from the ERO about how we're not assessing the kids' development against curriculum objectives in all areas, I'm reluctant to really do that.

Why? Well because I think its been Pakehafied and I don't think that Maori kids necessarily, you shouldn't be trying to fit square kids into round objects, round objects into square kids.

So how do you know if they are progressing? I'm not a fan of PAT testing or any of those kinds of things. So we have stopped doing those kinds of tests, but as soon as you stop doing those kinds of testing you don't have nice little data to show ERO. So then they say 'Well you don't have sufficient data,' whereas we know where the kids are reading at by doing running records and all of those kinds of data gathering which is a little bit better.

So you do use running records as a way of gauging whether they are still progressing well? What about in the curriculum areas? We've been using a series of standard-based assessment-type things in each of the areas, so we've been using 4 or 5 criteria in terms of the essential skills, focusing on co-operative skills and information gathering skills.

So you're talking about the essential skills area? Yes, and that was not satisfactory in terms of curriculum assessments that ERO expected to see. We've been focusing in the last 12 months on trying to develop some of those standardised criteria as opposed to the myriad of check lists about whether kids were achieving objectives such and such out of such and such document.

So you feel confident that how you are gathering data on each of the children tells you enough about whether they are learning, progressing in their learning? Yes, because of my background I'm focused on two things. Effectively my major concern is literacy. I really want to know what the kids are doing in reading and how they're progressing with oral language as a first step because I believe that's a key to reading and then written language, and we achieve in numeracy as well. (English-medium primary school principal)

One primary school with a bilingual unit had noticed a drop in literacy levels of the school's new entrant cohorts over the past years and thought the school's teachers needed to monitor the levels more closely and look at how literacy developed throughout the child's time at school. She felt that it was easy to become complacent, without "reality checks". The school used a portfolio system and had a very comprehensive assessment system for the essential skills, which were assessed fortnightly. Data had been collected and analysed demographically since 1993–94, and the school had recently established a taskforce to assess the structure of its assessment system; it had also moved to share more assessments with parents.

We keep portfolios of kids' work so every child has a portfolio and that's the basis of reporting with parents in the beginning of the year so they can actually see a progression. We only started formally this year with that. Hopefully now and

over the next 2 or 3 years as a parent you would actually see where your child's coming through with their different bits of work, some of it standardised and some of it not. So it's giving a parent the access to their child's progress. (Bilingual-unit primary school principal)

The bilingual-unit teacher in this school thought the portfolio approach was particularly helpful for reporting progress to parents.

> What's really good is that we have a portfolio system and anything we assess, and the beginning and end-of-year testing is collated in this portfolio with self portraits [each term] so they see the development of their child coming through. That's good data to have at parent interviews and any time that the parents want to see us. I really like the portfolio system. Assessment here is done fortnightly at the moment in terms of the national framework skills, but that's being restructured . . . so that we're actually going to look at one skill per term, be it work and study, social and co-operative and I feel the school is actually quite on to it and time-lining our skills so that we can get our long-term planning specific to those skills, I really like that sort of organising.
>
> Interestingly when the taskforce team was being developed the bilingual teacher was excluded from their team and it was only through a push that I asked—hey, I've got to be on here just so that I know where your thinking is going because to me no one else could've provided or looked after that and they were open to that, they said—sure—so I think for Maori teachers they have to be on taskforces to know the drive of the school and feed that back to your parents. Assessment, I'm liking it only because it's coming into a good structure and they've been trialling it for the last 3 years. The way they've been doing it is really good. (Bilingual-unit primary school teacher)

Another bilingual-unit school principal thought the Maori children in her school were doing really well, with plenty of targeted support.

> I think they're doing well. I'd like them to do better but last year about 83 percent of our standard 4 children went out reading at or above their chronological age. And that was from 30 percent at the end of their first year. When they come in, their reading's very low. With reading recovery and every sort of strategy about reading known to man, it makes a huge difference. We feel our achievement is good, but the reality is that for a lot of our children the only place that they will read is here at the school. And they read because they are required, and they do it for better or worse but it's not their way of life. They'd rather have a sega or a nintendo, or sporty ones would probably rather play sport. (Bilingual-unit primary school principal)

School Certificate

As another way of getting an indication of Maori children's progress, and to cast it in term of national achievement levels, teachers were asked to rate their Maori children's likely achievement level on the School Certificate examination, provided it was still in existence.[11] Teachers felt confident that those children they categorised as average or above would pass School Certificate, provided they kept on task, or had the right attitude towards learning. One teacher had already resigned herself to the fact that the majority of her Maori children would not get that far with their education because of their environment. Those children who were struggling would also struggle with School Certificate. Teachers were quite confident with these judgments even although the children were still at primary school.

> They achieved quite well. They are academically quite a good group. A couple may fall behind because they are not motivated, not because they haven't got the ability, but perhaps they won't bother. But I should imagine the other 4 will probably do quite well [pass School Certificate and go on to the 7th form]. Yes. In fact if they kept on task all of them would do all right. (English-medium Pakeha primary school teacher)

> I've got 3 that would definitely go to university as long as their attitude doesn't go down the tubes somewhere and do very well, but that's unusual I have to say, I'm really sad to have to give them up at the end of the year. It all depends on attitude but given the attitude they've got now, possibly 50 percent of the class would pass. Does that sound low to you? I don't know. (Bilingual-unit primary school Pakeha teacher)

> I will be really concerned about my one right down at the very bottom. In general I think they will cope well yes. (English-medium primary school Maori teacher)

> I think within my class there will be a core group of them that will do really well and there'll be quite a high percentage of them, this is really defeatist, I'd be quite surprised if some of them even get that far because of the home, not the home so much as the background that they come from, because for a number, not a huge number but for a number of kids, they're only here because they have to be, they are going through the motions of education and schooling because they have to be. So there's not that encouragement at home. (Bilingual-unit primary school Maori teacher)

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[11] Wylie and Smith (1995) used this as a quick way of getting an overall judgment of children's progress; Timperley, Robinson, and Bullard (1999) also use this as a method to translate local assessments into national terms.

Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions of Maori Students' Progress

Most secondary schools assessed students on entry to the school and discovered that many Maori were below the general school population in regard to academic achievement. Suspension rate was another measure commonly used as an indicator of Maori students' progress.

All of the teachers in the study collected data to gauge their students' progress which was then put on computer. Few of the teachers analysed their own classroom data by ethnicity because they thought it was time consuming, results were depressing, and they had an inherent idea of which children were doing well, and some were doing well and others were not. Some teachers had only Maori children in their class, and some teachers thought that analysing data by ethnicity gave the data an "ethnic twist" they thought was inappropriate, since they did not like to treat groups differently. The analysis of data across the school by gender and ethnicity was generally carried out by principals.

> I think they are doing well. I think the majority of them would be average in maths and one or two have to work harder. In maths I would be saying one or two [are not doing well] and in Maori it's those two I've spoken about but I think there's two children that I can speak to in Maori and they understand. (Secondary school Maori bilingual-unit teacher of Maori and mathematics)

> I think more through natural intellect and huge amounts of deliberate homework time they're doing as well as most other kids in the group, whether they're European or Asian or whatever. (English-medium secondary school Pakeha social studies teacher)

> OK, I just put OK, I don't say brilliantly, but OK. (English-medium secondary school Maori mathematics teacher)

It was not always clear what yardstick the secondary school teachers were using to gauge their students' progress. For example, one English teacher who had 7 Maori students reported they were doing quite well compared with other students, but when she was commenting on who she thought would pass School Certificate English at the end of the year, she only expected 2 to pass, and 3 more if they were lucky.

> They are actually doing OK in comparison with everybody else, they are doing quite well. Of those 7 children I have one that is a very reluctant reader and as soon as you say 'get out your book' he'll say 'I can't read' and it's not that he can't, he is particularly slow and I think that's half the problem, it takes him so long that he loses the enjoyment of it, so that's a confidence thing. One pretends that he's reading and I don't think that he's taking anything in and that's a real skill. We had a chat about it. So I have to check his comprehension quite often to see that he's actually doing the job. One is a closet reader I think, and actually really enjoys it but just doesn't tell anybody he does, and two of the girls are

particularly good, and one's not particularly organised and I don't think she does any independent reading.

And School Certificate?

> Maybe 3 will be lucky. Two I would expect to be there. (Pakeha teacher of English in a secondary school with a bilingual unit)

School Certificate

Secondary teachers were less confident than the primary teachers that the Maori children in their class would pass School Certificate.

> No good. They've had a difficult time in the past 2 years, and now they're 5th formers. And last year they had 4 relievers, previous year I don't know what it was but they didn't have a consistent programme, this is what they're telling me, what the school's telling me. So they aren't prepared. (English-medium Maori secondary school teacher of the Maori language)

> I don't think that half of them would have many problems [with School Certificate mathematics], the other half might be struggling, just depends on their needs from now to then [School Certificate]. (Bilingual-unit Maori secondary school teacher of mathematics and Maori language)

> All of them will pass oral [Maori language] and I would say everyone passes in Maori, but it's the grading that will carry them into the 5th form so, out of that 19, 15 will go into 6th form. (English-medium Maori secondary school teacher of Maori language)

> Of those 6, two definitely should do something, the others may struggle in some subjects, but I mean, I'm just a social studies teacher and I am only seeing it from my point of view, they may be good in some subjects they like doing. Two definitely to bursary, we would hope all of them could get to the 7th form. Because even if they are not necessarily doing a bursary, I would like to encourage them to go to Polytech and there must be a course or something there that they can go on to improve their education. (English-medium Pakeha secondary school teacher)

The Maori teacher at one secondary school described the situation quite bluntly in relation to her class reaching the 7th form.

> My 5th form, they'll make it because they've got no other alternatives, nowhere else to go. Because it's not just my class that are not achieving and not committing themselves, but they'll get there because they can't get a job, they just stay at school, they can't go anywhere else. Pessimistic as that is, that's where I am at as

far as where I think they're at. I've got good ones in my 3rd form. (English-medium Maori secondary school teacher of Maori language)

Case Study

Teacher

One teacher discussed each of her Maori children in some detail and indicated some of the reasons they will pass or fail School Certificate English.

> (Student A) got 24 [in the mock exams] and I think she might be in the high 30s by the end of the year.
> (Student B) she's not noted for her frequent attendance she got 33, possibly get 40s, mid 40s.
> (Student C) who's on 66 could well get 75 or so, she could come up. Most of them will come up.
> (Student D) is a bright girl but she's got other things on her mind so I don't know what she will do, spends a lot of time on make-up, but she's clever, hard to say.
> (Student E) probably won't [pass School Certificate English]. He got 24 in his exam. He'll be lucky to get mid 30s. I think his mother is right when she says he's not very mature, he's a bit of a follower, he is a person who is influenced by others. He has got a good strong family there, a caring, supportive, family but I think he is easily influenced at this stage. He hasn't got any real self worked out, to look after his own interests, he's got a bit of growing up to do there. (English-medium Pakeha secondary school teacher of English)

So do you think many will pass School Certificate in that group at the end of the year?

> Well 2 will and the others won't. They may be up to 44 to 50, we have got a lot of students around that mark and always there, which is the sad thing. Passing School Certificate is very much knowing the system and knowing what's expected and a lot of them are very reluctant to accept that. They want to do things their way and so we are in a sense caught because we are trying to teach them the system so they can pass the exam.
>
> We let students go into the 6th form with marks as low as 43/44. It's a struggle, it's a real struggle if your marks are that low and unless you set your mind to it. At 6th form you are at the bottom of your tertiary study while School Certificate is the finish of your primary and secondary. I almost always find students that have scraped into the 6th form, unless they work really hard, they find it a real struggle in the 6th form.

One of the students whom she predicted would not get School Certificate English surprised even her own parents.

> Academically she's [student A] not too hot but she realised about 2 months before School Certificate that she had to study and she studied and she got English, she actually got English and that's the only subject she got, all the rest she just missed out, they were in the 40s. We were quite pleased in the end. (English-medium secondary school parent)

When the student was asked what she thought of her English teacher, she said, "She's all right, she's a good teacher. She knows what she's doing."

So how did this student achieve School Certificate English when her teacher and her parents did not expect her to?

Parents

Her parents described her as a good student in primary school who was always in the top 2 or 3 students in her class. They had the expectation that she would attend university. At primary school the student herself wanted to be a doctor. When she started secondary school she began to struggle.

> She didn't apply herself. She's only just realising now that you have to actually do homework, and that was a big struggle. As soon as she hit college her school work seemed to be out the back door. She just started missing classes and just didn't see education as being important. (English-medium secondary school parent)

When her parents realised she was getting behind they approached her teachers for help.

> We got her to do her homework every night, but see we didn't actually watch, we said it's time for homework, go into your room and then when we realised she was falling behind we actually asked teachers what sort of catch-up work they can give her. They told us what to do but it wasn't very helpful. Oh they gave us like sections in the text book to work at, this is what she should have covered, or just little assignments, and I don't think she actually did do any of them, the extra bit we tried to give her. You know it was sort of her attitude.
>
> Why it's changed over the last 6 months, I don't know. Maybe someone at school, kids at school talked to her. I don't know, I wouldn't know. Someone did the right thing for her this year, whether it was here or at school. Someone said the right thing and she realised that she can achieve.

Student

Here is the student explaining her marks.

> I don't know, just when I was younger everything was easy and I don't know, that's probably why I got that good mark.
>
> Sometimes I really try, and I get low marks but sometimes, I don't like getting low marks though.

> I'm not too sure what they ask sometimes. I don't understand what they're asking, like, oh it's hard to explain. Well its pretty simple what they're asking, but you just don't know really what they're talking about.

She thought that when she received a good mark, it was because the work was easy; when she received a bad mark, it was because she couldn't understand what was being asked of her, and effort alone could not help.

Teachers' Reasons for Lack of Academic Progress

Teachers gave a variety of reasons as to why students did not make good progress. Most were to do with the child or home circumstances. These included an unfortunate family life and a transient educational history, a lack of motivation and attitude which were important factors in encouraging children to remain task focused, children not having the ability, learning a second language without good control over their first language, late maturation of the child, lack of organisational skills, inability to adopt different study habits, not knowing the system to pass examinations, peer pressure and being easily influenced, and lack of encouragement from home. Also mentioned was a number of relievers in a year, resulting in an inconsistent teaching programme.

Kura Kaupapa Maori

Kura have 3 sets of achievement levels:

- the national curriculum established by the government,
- the Maori curriculum, which is set by tupuna and kaumatua, and
- the aspirations, expectations, and goals of the whanau, parents, teachers, and children.

In kura kaupapa Maori the teacher is not regarded as the sole person responsible for the education of the child nor the only person who has the skills or knowledge to educate. Education is a responsibility shared by the parents, whanau, teachers, and children. There were many opportunities in the 2 kura for parents to share their aspirations, expectations, and goals, and there were also opportunities to evaluate the progress of the kura and assess each of the children.

The teachers used many of the usual assessment tools with the children: running records, 6-year-old nets, BSM (Beginning School Mathematics) checklists, Young Australian Maths, and checklists for science and technology curricula. In addition to those assessment tools one kura also had a process of goal setting, support to achieve that goal, and an assessment of the goal before resetting further goals. The evaluation of the aspirations, expectations, and goals of their parents and whanau were carried out by the most appropriate means. A child's native-speaking kuia or koroua was the assessor of the child's Maori language; the parents were the assessors of the child's enjoyment of school; and children wanting to go to school even when they were sick was another indicator.

Reporting children's progress was a shared effort. Unlike the usual 15-minute parent-teacher interview time in mainstream schools, one kura whanau held regular day-long hui to evaluate the progress of the kura and the children. Children's progress was discussed as a whanau. Each parent had an opportunity to discuss the progress of their child, any concerns they had, and how other parents and teachers could work on helping the child. Parents or whanau were expected to first evaluate their child's progress and the teacher would extend their understanding of their child's progress if needed.

> E ai ki ā rātou hiahia, e ai ki ō rātou wawata ai hoki ki ngā taumata kei te mōhiotia e rātou. Nā reira, mehemea kei te arotakengia e rātou te reo Māori o ā rātou tamariki, i te nuinga o ngā wā ko te paearu arotake mā rātou ko tō rātou mōhiotanga ki te reo, nā reira mehemea kei te tino matatau te kuia ki te reo Māori ko ia hei paerewa, ko ia hei taumata, mō te reo Māori o tana tamaiti. Ana, kia tae ki te wā, kei te hui tahi mātou katoa, māna hei kī kei te pai te reo Māori o taku tamaiti. Kei te rongo ahau i te nui o ngā kupu kei te whakamahia e ia. Ka taea e ia te kōrero mō ngā take katoa i roto i te reo Māori. He nui te reo Pākehā kei te rangona e ahau, engari ētahi wā kei te rongo au i te reo Māori e rere ana i tana waha. Kei te koa au mō te reo Māori o taku tamaiti. Nā reira i roto i ngā hui arotake nei, ko ngā mātua kei te whakawā. Ana, mā rātou te kōrero tuatahi ko tā ngā kaiako he tāpiritanga noa iho. Ana, kāore mō te whakarite kia tekau mā rima miniti mō ia mātua. Te tikanga ka tae ā-whānau mai te katoa, ana, ka kōrerotia ia tamaiti e te katoa o te whānau. Te nuinga o ngā wā ko te mātua me te kaiako anake kei te kōrero, engari kua whai wāhi te katoa o te whānau ki te whakaputa whakaaro. Ana i te Hātarei i pērā nē i tāpiri mai, i tāpiri kōrero mai a ētahi atu, mō ia tamaiti. (Kura Whānau)

One parent had a number of children who had gone to mainstream schools. At parent-teacher interviews the teachers tended to focus only on the problems with her children, and not what they did well. By the end of one interview with a mainstream teacher her spirit for her child had hit rock-bottom. The major difference between mainstream and kura kaupapa Maori for this parent was the total whanau support for her children.

> Nā, ko tērā tētahi mea tino pai ki ahau, nā te mea tokowhā āku tamariki i haere ki kura kē i mua i te tīmatanga o ngā kura kaupapa Māori. Kei te mōhio au ki ngā rerekētanga o aua kura ki tēnei kura. Ana, ko tērā tētahi o ngā mea e tino koa au ki te kite, te tautoko o tēnei kura i āku kōtiro. Ana ko ngā kōtiro o everyone nāku, nā te mea ka tae atu ki ngā parent interviews o ērā atu kura, ka kōrero tana kaiako mō ana hēanake. Kāore a ia i whāki i āna mahi pai. Ana, i roto i te tekau mā rima miniti tino heke tāku wairua mō tāku tama. Ana, ko tērā tētahi mea pai ki ahau, tino koa au, mō te noho o āku tamariki ki tēnei kura. (Kura parent)

Wharekura

Secondary school parents and students decided with the teachers the subjects students would learn each year, then sought the teachers who would teach those subjects. There were subjects students wanted to take, but they were unable to find people to teach them. For example, one student who wanted to be a pathologist needed human biology.

The wharekura students' marks for their work were moderated by teachers from mainstream schools for each of the different subjects. A day was set aside when the subject teachers would come with teachers who could also read and speak Maori to look through the assignments the students had done for the year, and the marks they had received from their own teachers. The moderators would then discuss the appropriateness of the marks in comparison with students in mainstream classes. Sometimes the marks came down and sometimes they went up.

It was a transparent process for both the children and parents and it was a time of accountability for the teachers, to gauge whether their teaching and assessment of their students was of the same standard and rigour as those of their mainstream colleagues. Children were present, and parents were there if available.

School Certificate

Both kura did not wait for their children to reach the fifth form to sit School Certificate subjects. They sat them when the teachers thought they are ready. Readiness was gauged from the moderation process described above, and experience of the performance levels of former students who passed School Certificate subjects.

Although their students often sat the exams earlier than usual, they have performed well. One student received 70 percent for School Certificate mathematics while in the third form. Others in the third and fourth form passed bursary Maori, School Certificate science and mathematics, and sixth form computing.

The kura has decided to wait for the fifth form for the current third and fourth formers to sit School Certificate mathematics and science. Although they are confident that some of the fourth formers would pass, they want them to pass well.

A couple of wharekura students whose parents and whanau left school with no qualifications passed School Certificate mathematics while still in the third form. Another from similar circumstances passed fifth and sixth form examinations while in the third form. The student is currently in the seventh form, has a diploma from a wananga Maori, and wants to return the following year.

> Ana ko tētahi o aua ākonga i te reanga toru i riro i a ia te pāngarau o te reanga rima. He tamaiti tēna o tētahi whānau pōhara. Me te mea hoki, kāore anō hoki tētahi o tana whānau, kia whiwhi i te tohu mātauranga i te whare wānanga o te kura tuatoru. Tērā pea kāore anō tētahi kia whiwhi tohu o te kura tuarua. Ana taua ākonga, ana ko tētahi atu he pōhara tana whānau, kāore anō kia riro i a rātou he tohu kura tuatoru, i riro i a ia te diploma? He nui ana marau reanga rima,

reanga ono kua riro i a ia. Kotahi te marau reanga whitu, ko te reo Māori tērā, i a ia i te reanga whā. Me te pōkairua o te whare wānanga o [ingoa whare wānanga] ka riro i a ia i tērā tau [ingoa tohu whare wānanga]. Kei a ia tērā. Kei te kura nei i tana tau reanga whitu kei a ia tērā tohu i te whare wānanga. I pirangi ia ki te hoki mai ki te kura ki te whai i ētahi atu marau kura. Tērā pea i te whakaaro hoki a ia, mō te tākaro haupoi, ana i roto ia i tērā tima i toa, tērā pea i te whakaaro hoki a ia mō te kapa-haka. Engari ko ia tētahi, ko rāua ngā mea kua kōrerotia nei hei tauira kāore he tino take o te pōhara o te whānau. Kei te whakapono au ki tērā. Ae he āhuatanga kei reira, kei te pā mai ki tā te tamaiti ako, engari he nui ētahi atu mā te kura, mā te whānau hei whakamāmā i ērā āhuatanga. (Wharekura teacher)

School Certificate English was causing some concern however in this kura. Students who were passing mathematics, science, and Maori, gaining marks in the 80s and 90s, were only just passing School Certificate English. The poor marks for English had children thinking they were not very good at speaking English. Therefore the kura had evaluated the opportunities the children were getting to read English books. Previously they had English books available only once they entered secondary school. Children in the upper primary school level are now able to access English books in their classroom.

Reasons for Success

A major reason for student success at kura kaupapa Maori is the fact that the kura whanau play the role of a supporting and caring whanau. These students were treated as if they were the teachers' own children. Many parents also had immense respect for the staff at kura for the commitment that they showed to all of the children and parents. Teachers went beyond the duties of a usual teacher to help parents and children. Some parents believed that their child entered wharekura with a confidence and an eagerness to learn because the teachers had instilled the belief that the child could achieve anything they wanted to. There was no such phrase as "I can't".

Kua kite, kua mātakitaki au ki a ia e kōrero ana, e whakahaere ana i te kura, i te rōpu. He maha ngā wā kua kite ia o ngā huapai o ana mahi. Nā te mea kei roto i te whare-kura ahau, kua kite au i ngā tamariki e whakawhiti ana mai tana reo rōpu me tā rātou pakari, tā rātou hiahia ki te ako. Ko tērā te mea nui. Ae. Ka taea e ia ki te whakaako ki aua tamariki, ka puta he tamariki tino puku mahi. Kua kite hoki au i ngā tamariki o ētahi atu kura kaupapa Māori, he rerekē Ae. Ko te mea, ka taea e [ingoa kaiako] ki te whakaako ki te tamaiti, mehemea kei te pirangi koe ki te mahi, whakamahi tēnei ka taea. Kāore he raru, kāore he whakaaro kei te koretake ahau. Ko tērā te mea nui o tēnei kura, te confidence, o aua tamariki katoa. Ko tērā pea te mea tino rerekē o ēnei tamariki, i ngā tamariki o ētahi atu kura. Kāore pea he tamaiti e whakaaro ana, kei te kūare ahau. Kei te mōhio rātou katoa, pai ake ahau i taku hoa i tēnei mahi, engari pai ake ia i ahau i t ērā mahi. (Kura parent and wharekura teacher)

Parents' Perceptions of Children's Progress

We asked the parents how they thought their child was progressing at school generally in all subjects, in the Maori language, and socially.

Table 13

Parents' Perceptions of Their Child's Overall Progress

	English Medium		Bilingual Unit		Kura Kaupapa Maori	TOTAL
	Primary (n=21)	Secondary (n=30)	Primary (n=6)	Secondary (n=6)	(n=18)	(n=81)
Progressing very well	8	6	1	1	8	24
Progressing well	4	7	1	2	7	21
Average process	3	5	1	3	-	12
Below average progress	3	9	2	-	-	14
Developing at their pace, strengths pushed, weaknesses nurtured	-	-	-	-	2	-
Don't know	1	3	1	-	1	6
Not covered	2	-	-	-	-	2

Kura kaupapa Maori parents were more positive about their children's progress than those who had their children in English-medium or bilingual-unit schools. Parents of secondary students at English-medium schools were least positive about their children's progress.

How Do Parents Know About Their Child's Progress?

Parents based their understanding of their child's progress on school reports, parent-teacher interviews, going to school at the teacher's request to discuss behavioural concerns and then talking about the child's progress, comparison with their other children's progress at that particular age, lack of news about their education—"no news is good news"—rewards that were brought home such as certificates, stickers and chocolate fish, and homework. Many of the parents also used as an indicator their child's desire to go to school each day.

Kura parents were more inclined to visit school on a regular basis and take the opportunity to talk to their child's teacher or to look through their child's work. At one of the kura, 5 of the 9 parents interviewed were teachers in either kohanga reo, primary school, or secondary school so they had knowledge of learning and teaching that they could use in order to understand their child's progress.

Te Reo Maori

There was wide variation in how much Maori language the children had, and its level. Thirteen children were learning the Maori language at primary school.

Table 14

Maori Language and Culture Programmes in the English-medium Primary Schools

	English-medium primary school		English-medium primary school		English-medium primary school with a bilingual unit		English-medium primary school with a bilingual unit		
	PT	MT	PT	MT	PT	MT	MTBU	PT	MTBU
Classroom:									
Simple phrases					*				
Maori followed by English				*					
Level 3 immersion (30–50%)							*		
Level 2 immersion (50–80%)									*
Songs				*		*			*
Maori topics	*	*					*		*
Tikanga, e.g., karakia		*					*		*
School-wide:									
Kapahaka	*	*			*	*	*	*	*
Language class			*	*					
Extension language class for kohanga reo children	*	*							

PT = Pakeha teacher
MT = Maori teacher
MTBU = Maori teacher in bilingual unit.

Each of the 6 secondary schools that took part in this research offered the Maori language as a subject. Twenty-three of the 36 children were learning the Maori language as a subject at secondary school. The Maori language was taught for about 3 hours a week, often through the medium of English and using a grammarian's approach and rote learning. One secondary school teacher had recently began to use the immersion approach to teaching the Maori language as a subject.

Bilingual Units

Primary School Bilingual Units

One teacher believed the parents of the children in her unit saw value in learning Maori, but wanted the children to read in English. She had restricted her Maori-language programme to 1½ hours in the morning.

> [Parents ask] how's their English reading. They're always comparing themselves to the mainstream children, and because I'm aware of that I make sure I've got my English reading happening and that they're keeping up with their chronological age of their peers and mainstream. I've had to pull back the reins. I'm getting feedback from my parents that it's really important to them, and if that's important to them then I've got to deliver it. One reason I think it's being a minority culture within a dominant culture of English-speaking school, and second, that hardly any of my parents speak Maori at home, they were involved in kaupapa Maori in their mahi, whatever their mahi is, so they see value in it, but

> yes they would like their children to learn reading in English. (Bilingual-unit Maori primary school teacher)

The other bilingual-unit teacher spread her Maori language across all subjects throughout the day and believed she used between 50 and 80 percent Maori language in her class. She taught an element of the Maori language in most curriculum areas but the children first learnt to read in English.

The principal of the school explained what she perceived the Maori community wanted in relation to the Maori language:

> I don't think that if a kura opened tomorrow we would lose all our Maori children. I think we would lose a very very small proportion. I think this is where people have opted because that's what they want. I mean about 5 years ago we inherited a lot of families from [name of another local primary school] which is full immersion and people said, 'No, we want both, we actually want our kids to be well versed in both. We don't want all this way or all that way'. So I suppose we tread a middle course really. You could perhaps say we tread a New Zealand course.

How fluent is the Maori of standard 4 children who have been in the whanau of the bilingual-unit?

> I think they understand basic Maori very well. I think they can respond. They certainly deliver in their mahi. The boys can adapt to whaikorero and give more than just a 'nice to see you here, welcome and please sit down'. They know a lot of the protocol. The children within the classroom situation use Maori, I don't know whether Maori kids respond in Maori and use it with one another, but you don't hear it in the playground, it doesn't seem to go out. They certainly are not going to come out as fluent Maori speakers, but they will have a good basic knowledge that they could build on or take on themselves in later years. None of the teachers are native speakers, the one that is coming next year [teacher's name] I think might be. (Bilingual-unit primary school principal)

Secondary School Bilingual Units

One bilingual-unit secondary school teacher took her third form bilingual-unit for mathematics and Maori in the Maori language.

The other secondary school bilingual unit remained together for the majority of their subjects and teachers came to them. Where possible the teachers used content they believed would be more relevant to Maori students. Some of the subjects were delivered in Maori only.

One secondary school had disestablished its bilingual unit after 5 years because it was unable to find appropriately qualified staff to teach mathematics, science, social studies, and other subjects through the medium of the Maori language. Staffing is a problem for

bilingual units. Two schools that took part in the study had bilingual units in previous years, but closed them mainly due to the lack of suitable staff.

Bilingualism

The type of programme in which children were enrolled often reflected the parents' and teachers' level of understanding of bilingualism, particularly in relation to the Maori and English languages. Kura kaupapa Maori parents and teachers were more likely to understand that for children to be truly bilingual in Maori and English, in the context of this country, a total immersion or Maori-medium-only programme was required. This is because of the near monolingual nature of New Zealand society, and the paucity of use of Maori in the media, public settings, other than marae, and in everyday conversation. Many Maori parents are not fluently bilingual themselves, and often have a limited knowledge and use of te reo Maori.

Many of the bilingual-unit parents and some teachers and principals did not share this understanding, and thought that bilingual education would allow Maori students to become fluent in both Maori and English.[12] There was a tendency to use English-language proficiency as their yardstick of educational value. For example, 2 bilingual-unit primary school parents changed their children from a total immersion unit to a bilingual unit at the age of 8 years because they were concerned about their English-language literacy.

On the other hand, an English-medium Pakeha principal, who happened to have his own children in kura kaupapa Maori, had a better understanding than many involved in bilingual units. He is clear about the aim of the once-a-week Maori-language class in his school.

> I think the reintroduction of our Maori-language programme is pretty important. We're certainly not making any progress in terms of making the kids bilingual, because it's just not enough. A couple of hours a week is a waste of time. But it does give the kids a feeling of them as Maori. (English-medium primary school principal)

He wanted to reintroduce a bilingual or immersion programme to his school, which has a 50 percent Maori population, so he carried out a survey.

> We wanted to find out from our own parents, and that came from a request from a Maori parent, as part of the charter review, what could we do about improving

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[12] The parents in this study were similar in their thinking about bilingual education as those bilingual school parents interviewed in the AGB McNair study (1992, p. 75), whose predominant reason for choosing a bilingual-unit option was: "important to learn/understand both Maori and English" (69% of 285 parents). The 2 other main reasons were that it was "important to learn Maori values"(29%); and it was "important to learn the Maori language" (13%). The total-immersion option was not attractive to these parents because there was "too much Maori and not enough English" (46%).

the quality and the range of language that was happening here? The result of that survey was a bit disappointing.

It was a good response in terms of the number of respondees but it was a negative response in terms of the number of parents that wanted to actually increase the level of Maori that was happening here or wanted to actually stick their necks out and say let's go for having a unit established here.

And there are a number of reasons for that, disappointing for me personally in that we didn't seem to have the support from the parents in terms of wanting the reo kaupapa to carry on here. And the major reason for that of course is the establishment of [name of kura kaupapa Maori], the bus goes past at the end of the road here and picks up the kids on the corner and most of our kohanga reo kids are actually going to [name of kura kaupapa Maori] now and not into here. So there's a whole bunch of issues really that are compounding. Despite that, still 50 percent of our kids are Maori. (English-medium primary school principal)

The bilingual-units were sometimes quite vulnerable, and highly dependent on obtaining the number of students to make a programme viable, and finding suitably qualified and stable staff.

Some schools with bilingual units found that the greater the use of Maori language in the programme, the lower were the enrolments of children in the unit. This created a lower teacher:child ratio in the bilingual unit compared with the English-medium classes, which then had to take the overflow of children from the bilingual unit. This imbalance in ratios could cause resentment.

Support for the Maori language in the home was also perceived as a barrier to the development of Maori fluency. Bilingual-unit teachers commented that many of the parents of their students were not able to speak Maori, and therefore could not support the language at home. One school used to hold evening classes for the parents until it became too burdensome for the kaiarahi reo.

> I know our kaiarahi reo in 1996 actually took te reo Maori nights with the parents and that was a huge commitment on her and her husband's behalf and parents did ask for it last year but I just couldn't provide that again, it was a huge commitment for her and her partner to do and I think it was quite successful, I suppose again that's where I think parents need to take the responsibility on themselves but it's possibly not knowing the venues to go to get the te reo Maori. (Bilingual-unit primary school teacher)

Bilingual units were sometimes perceived by other teachers in the school as receiving special treatment, or as separatist.

> There were some staff here that saw it as the elite group, those Maoris you know that class, that really hurt me but however I just plodded along. I've very fortunate to have a very very supportive principal. He speaks Maori, he's Pakeha, got no toto Maori [Maori blood] in him but I'm very fortunate to have him

because any problems I had I just bashed on his door or just walked in and said look, this is what's happening and I'm hearing this in the staff briefing and hearing that, and I don't like it and he will go up in the staffroom and explain to the whole staff why that class is like that. (Maori bilingual-unit teacher)

It has a real mix I think, now they don't go through to the fourth form, it's only the third so it's great for the fourth form and I think it's not quite so negative because I think they were moved out they were in papakainga, they spent all of their time there, they were their own group and they weren't actually integrated in the school until fifth form and they were a big group and there were a lot of naughty ones and I think that a lot of the rest of the people in the school thought that they got lots of benefits which I thought was quite sad. I think at the beginning it was too big, I think we tried to do too much too soon. Now it's very small, they are not behavioural problems, Maori is their first language or they are learning. (Maori secondary school teacher in a school with a bilingual unit)

One parent thought that the bilingual-unit put all the strugglers together in the same class.

He was also in the bilingual-unit at the college and I'd put him in there because he'd been to kohanga and I thought this could bring out a bit of confidence in him but what it actually did was put all the strugglers together. They all struggled, in fact he is the only one still at school out of his group of friends there that started in the third form.

They sent a survey home to parents who had children in there asking, did they think the unit was working or not working, and if so why or why not, and out of all the students that were in there 2 parents wrote back. I was one of them and my sister was the other. And basically we probably said the same. Her boys were above average and after being in the unit they slumped to below and this year is their second-year seventh, they did bursary and they had the brains, but they then got into this mode like all the other kids and just cruised for 4 years. All the Maori kids that were above average or even average stayed in the mainstream, whereas when the bilingual unit started at the college we thought all the Maori kids will go in it and so they'll all be there together but that didn't happen. (English-medium secondary school parent)

Another couple from the same bilingual unit perceived the bilingual unit differently. It worked well for their daughter.

They were hearing quite a lot of Maori. More than what they would have probably separately I think. Plus they also established their own network, you know they were a very close group, which I think is what a lot of Maori children like isn't it? (English-medium secondary school parent)

These parents were not happy about the process to disband the bilingual unit. They did not feel as if they were part of the decision. They felt the students were not prepared for the decision and were surprised that a decision had been taken to close it. The suggestion this parent made to the principal that a meeting be held to discuss the disestablishment with the parents was fruitless.

> I rang [name of principal] up and I said I wanted to go and talk to him about it. I asked him for a hui about it but as we set to planning a hui which I did because, we rang other parents about it to plan a hui. We were told that not only did the Maori teacher vote fairly emphatically to close it, but it was a fait accompli.
>
> What he said to me was he can't get the teachers, haven't got the numbers, just got a certain amount of Maori-language subjects to be taught and we can't spare a teacher to stay on top of it and the Maori teacher had voted to pull the plug on the Maori scheme.

One English-medium parent who could not get her child into the bilingual unit when he first started at school, for reasons unknown to her, was keen to have all the Maori children across the school associating and not separated into those in the bilingual unit, and those outside it.

> I'd like to see more involvement with the whanau unit across the school. I don't know that he will miss out greatly because he's not in the unit but it's important I think to keep the Maori kids associating rather than keeping the unit separate like a school within a school. I mean are there messages our kids and the other kids are getting when they say like my boy does 'Oh that's those kids, that's what they do'. Are we creating another kind of Maori kid by doing that, that they are different in some way than the other ones in mainstream? I guess I'll get more into that argument as he progresses through school. I mean I understand the need to be given room to develop but at what cost if they are seen to be different than us? Some things we hear about them, like the kids in there are either behavioural problems or they're elitist. Is that what we want, to cause divisions amongst the kids? (English-medium primary school parent)

Kura Kaupapa Maori

Both kura delivered all curriculum subjects at the primary school level in the Maori language only. At the secondary school level one kura continued to teach all subjects through the Maori language, except English which was introduced at fourth form level, with students being taught off the school premises for that subject. English books were also made available for children to read at the senior primary school and wharekura levels. English books were introduced at the senior primary school level the year after the School Certificate group did not perform as well in School Certificate English as might have been expected when compared with their other School Certificate subject marks.

Parents' Perceptions of Their Children's Maori Language Progress

Parents were asked if their children were learning the Maori language and to indicate their progress. Half of the parents in English-medium programmes,15 secondary school, and 9 primary school parents described their children as learning the Maori language. Seven secondary school and 2 primary school parents believed their children's Maori language was being maintained[13] after leaving programmes that had a greater Maori-language component than their current one. Their reasons were either that the language was being spoken at home or the children's language was at the stage that the programme that they had entered was able to maintain their level of fluency. Four of the 51 parents believed that their children's Maori-language ability had declined since leaving programmes that had a greater Maori-language component than the English-medium programmes they were currently enrolled in.

Table 15

Parents' Perceptions of Their Child's progress in Te Reo Maori

	English-medium		Bilingual-unit		Kura	
	Primary School	Secondary School	Primary School	Secondary School	Kaupapa Maori	TOTAL
Maintaining	2	7	4	3	18	34
Learning	8	15	-	3	-	26
Declining	3	1	2	-	-	6
Don't know	1	-	-	-	-	1
No language	6	5	-	-	-	11
Not covered	1	2			-	3
Total number of children	20	28	6	6	18	

Seven of the 12 bilingual-unit parents believed their children's Maori-language ability was being maintained, 3 children were learning the language, and 2 parents believed their child's Maori language had declined.

All 18 kura kaupapa Maori parents were confident their child's fluency in the Maori language was being maintained. All kura kaupapa Maori children interviewed had at least one parent who could speak Maori and spoke it at home. Many parents when they first started in kura kaupapa Maori took courses to learn te reo Maori to help support their children with their reo.

Those parents who could not understand or speak the language had difficulty describing their child's competence or progress in the Maori language with accuracy. They based their

[13] The 7 secondary school children had attended either kura kaupapa Maori, an immersion, or bilingual programme prior to entering secondary school or had been in a bilingual programme at secondary school. The one primary school child had been in kura kaupapa Maori prior to this school and maintained her Maori language with her grandparents with whom she had regular contact.

comments on the Maori songs their children learnt at school and sang at home or their child's understanding of the language when they were younger.

> I think she's doing pretty good. I mean I don't understand it but I wanted the kids to, and whenever I used to tell them off they used to speak to the other in Maori and I knew they were talking about me. Yeah I think she's doing well there. (Bilingual-unit primary school parent)

Some parents in mainstream and bilingual units thought it was good that their children were learning Maori but emphasised that they needed English, and they thought that Maori could be learnt later.

Summary

Individual teachers' perceptions of Maori students' progress was positive at the primary level, but school-wide analysis of assessment patterns made principals less sanguine that Maori children were achieving as well as others. A number of primary schools in the study had begun their own analysis to move to earlier identification of student needs, and earlier preventive strategies.

Secondary school entry assessments found many Maori students lagging behind their peers; the Maori students were less confident that they would pass School Certificate. Some who would remain at school would do so simply because of lack of other alternatives, and could struggle. The teachers expressed a range of reasons why their Maori students would struggle, and be more likely to hover around the pass mark than get high grades—some based on the family, some based on students' attitudes and independence—both of which indicate a lack of student engagement with school. Parents of secondary students at English-medium schools were least positive about their children's progress.

The 2 kura kaupapa Maori involved parents and students more in the assessment processes, and teachers at both reported more examination successes, and more confidence in their students. Lower marks in English than in other subjects had moved one kura to introduce English at an earlier age. Kura kaupapa Maori parents were generally more positive about their children's progress. They also had more informal contact with their child's teacher and the kura. Informal contact was identified by teachers and principals in all 3 kinds of school as a key to making educators more approachable for Maori parents, and encouraging them to discuss their child's progress, academic as well as social.

The tensions for Maori of living in what has become a largely English, monolingual country were most evident for those parents who had chosen bilingual units. English fluency had become their yardstick for judging their children's progress, yet they did not want their children to have no knowledge of te reo Maori and Maori values. Their expectations that bilingual units would allow their children to develop equal fluency in both Maori and English were often misplaced.

The bilingual units themselves were also vulnerable, with difficulties finding and keeping qualified teachers, and retaining a supported place in schools where Maori were in the minority, or where the separation of Maori students into those in the "mainstream" (by default) and those in the bilingual unit created additional tensions, particularly where the bilingual unit was seen (by its very nature) to be offering an inferior education.

8 SCHOOL INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE MAORI STUDENTS' LEARNING

Introduction

A national survey of schools in 1997 found that programmes such as taha Maori, Maori culture courses with a Maori-language component, and tikanga Maori courses were the most common initiatives that principals reported occurring in their schools to meet Maori needs, and the initiatives they thought made a positive difference for their Maori students (Keegan, 1997, p. 1). These initiatives resulted in an increase in Maori students' self-esteem—the most common result—motivation and positive attitudes, more security in their Maori identity, and achievement (Keegan, 1997, p. 12). Improved academic achievement was more likely to be reported by principals of schools with bilingual or immersion provision. These were more likely to be offered in schools with 15 percent or more Maori enrolment.

Lack of appropriate teachers and of money were the main reasons given for not providing Maori students with specific initiatives or programmes (Keegan, 1997, p. 18). Almost half the principals at schools with less than 15 percent Maori enrolment gave a lack of Maori students as a reason. Lack of parental support was a reason for 19 percent of these low-Maori-enrolment schools, rising to 29 percent of the high-Maori-enrolment schools. Yet schools often mentioned parent/whanau groups as the external group providing the most support for their programmes for Maori students.

All teachers, principals, and whanau were asked what initiatives their school had taken in the last few years for Maori children, which they thought had been successful. All but 2 of the 27 teachers had recently tried successful initiatives for their Maori students.

Table 16

School Initiatives To Cater for Maori Students

Initiative	Schools				
	Primary		Secondary		
	English-medium	Bilingual-unit	English-medium	Bilingual-unit	Kura Kaupapa Maori
Student behaviour	1	1	3	3	-
Home-school relationship	-	2	-	-	4
Motivation	-	-	5	1	-
Individual support	-	2	1	1	1
Maori identity	2	1	5	1	1
Academic	1	2	1	1	1
Teacher support/professional development	-	-	4	1	2

Secondary schools in particular have concentrated on programmes that address student behaviour and ways in which to improve that behaviour. English-medium secondary schools are also concerned with improving students' motivation to learn, and ways in which they can help students develop their identity as Maori. That identity is not a focus for kura kaupapa Maori, since it is their whole framework. It is therefore of great interest that the home-school relationship was the particular focus for kura kaupapa Maori, but rarely in the other schools.

Four of the English-medium secondary school teachers tried to include culturally relevant content in their subjects. Pakeha teachers were more inclined than Maori teachers to mention the inclusion of culturally relevant content as a successful initiative.

Principals and Maori teachers were more inclined than Pakeha teachers to suggest that the bilingual or immersion units had been successful in the past. Pakeha teachers thought that the bilingual or immersion units were not successful at the 2 secondary schools where the principal and Maori teachers believed it had been successful. The lack of suitably qualified bilingual or immersion teachers often caused bilingual or immersion units at both primary and secondary schools to collapse.

Secondary School Maori Teacher

> In the past we've had this class called te whanau tahi and it was a bilingual class. We ran it for 5 years and it stopped at the end of last year because we didn't have the teachers to teach in it. The aims of that unit were (1) te reo—to promote te reo—(2) to achieve, and (3) to retain them at school and we the Maori teachers who taught in that unit believed that those aims worked except we didn't have the teachers to teach mathematics, English, social studies, science and that's why it ended. The policy was to be reviewed after 5 years and it went for 5 years but every year we had a bilingual class and they stayed together for PE, health or science, and mathematics. Everything was supposed to be taught in Maori, but unfortunately we didn't have the teachers to do it. But having said that in terms of expectation at the beginning of every year all those things a meeting called for all those parents. Those students were selected to go into that class because they had to have come from kohanga, or from a bilingual class or a total immersion class. That was the criteria to get into that class. It was a selected group that went into that class and if you hadn't done that then they weren't eligible to be in that class. Parents were called to a meeting in the wharenui one afternoon, we had a barbeque and we laid out what we expected of the parents. I thought it was successful other than not having the permanent staff (English-medium Maori secondary school teacher)

Secondary School Pakeha Teacher

> Are you aware that we had an Maori immersion class? I don't think it was terribly successful. I think that from observation I think that it's changed over the years. I remember when it was introduced and the idea was that all the teachers involved, they weren't all Maori speakers but they were going to try and use

> Maori language where they could and I don't think that ever happened so I think the students came as a group and stayed as a group and they got this macho image and toughie group and they become very difficult and that's why [we] finally did away with it because they felt no one was happy with what was happening. Now I don't think there's any one clear reason why it failed because I think it must have been many contributing factors but it certainly wasn't successful, I don't think there is one thing. I think it would be good if they had a strong sense of identity but I would like it to be not the Once Were Warriors image but a pride in culture in who you are. I would like to see a sense of a gentler image, rather then a tough image. How you would bring that about I don't know. I suppose it would have a lot of parental involvement and a whole lot of commitment from the part of the school to put into action and it will take a bit more work, more work than any of us got the time for. So, I don't know. (English-medium secondary school Pakeha teacher)

Teacher support or professional development programmes were considered successful initiatives mainly by English-medium secondary school principals.

Kura kaupapa Maori whanau concentrated their initiatives on building home-school relationships and on professional development for their teachers about new holistic ways of learning which acknowledged different ways of learning, for example, de Bono's approach.

Primary schools with bilingual units were the only other school type that implemented an initiative in the area of the home-school relationship. The home-school relationship initiatives seem easy to sustain in schools which highly value this type of relationship, which have worked extensively to build this relationship, and which have good communications established with parents.

Some of the approaches schools have tried to improve Maori students' education are "off the peg" programmes, others are approaches which have been around for a long time.

Initiatives Implemented

Some of the initiatives which principals or teachers believe to be successful for Maori students are listed below and described in the following pages.

Maori Identity
Culturally relevant content
Maori-language classes and Maori protocol
Kaiarahi reo
Maori bilingual or immersion unit
Kura kaupapa Maori

Individual Support
Tuakana-teina

Academic
Saturday classes for SC Students
Homework centre
Development of oral language skills
Smaller classes
Kaupapa tino rangatiratanga
Replacing correspondence Maori courses with on-site teaching

Home-School Relationship
Build parent support and involvement
Family maths evenings
Shared responsibility for learning
Parents as teachers and curriculum designers
Parents as kura evaluators
Physical structure of the kura
Goal setting and evaluation

Motivation
Motivation programme
School improvement project
Mentoring
Te iho kohine

Student Behaviour
Major review of student behaviour
Responsibility model
Peer mediation
Tena kowhiria programme (Dare programme in maori)
Smoke busters
Tu tangata
Appointment of a Maori dean

Teacher Support
Professional development on teacher attitudes
Reinforcemeat of preconditions for learning
Format—learning styles
Te rongomau
de Bono—learning styles

Maori Identity

A number of principals and teachers reported Maori cultural activities as successful initiatives in their schools or classrooms.

Culturally Relevant Content

Four Pakeha teachers and one Maori teacher incorporated content which they thought was more culturally relevant to Maori students in the hope that they would take an interest in the work and feel that their Maori identity had been recognised and respected. Flax work, cooking Maori bread, and a marae visit were initiatives for one English-medium primary school teacher. Two English-medium secondary school teachers used New Zealand stories by authors such as Witi Ihimaera and Bernard Gadd.

Two English-medium secondary social studies teachers had different perspectives on the teaching of race relations in New Zealand. One teacher used similar overseas situations, such as South Africa, to discuss the issues of bicultural development and to develop the children's perspectives. The other teacher, who thought that the establishment of the bilingual unit (since disbanded) created a select group, used a multicultural approach to race relations and thought it important that children be exposed to many role models of different ethnic origin.

Maori-language Classes and Maori Protocol

One principal had reintroduced a weekly Maori-language programme. The demand was great enough to have 3 Maori-language groups which were taught once a week. He did not believe it was successful in terms of developing bilingual children but it gave the children a sense of being Maori. This school also incorporates aspects of Maori protocol as a part of the school; for example, the whole school takes part in powhiri (welcomes) for visitors, and pupils take their shoes off while in the classroom and do not sit on tables.

Kura Kaupapa Maori

Kura kaupapa Maori itself has been one of the most significant initiatives in Maori education in the last 12 years, significant in that it is Maori-centred and takes a more holistic approach than most English-medium schools, including those with bilingual provision. It approaches learning through 4 main dimensions, seeking to nurture children's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. As noted earlier, school is not regarded as separate from home: whanau are regarded as part of the school. All whanau members share in communal responsibility for the education and socialisation of the child, and the development of the child to reach full potential.

Individual Support

Tuakana-Teina

Tuakana-teina (peer support through an older-younger student pairing or grouping) was used in 2 Maori primary school teachers' classes. It was also used in various forms in 3 secondary schools. One secondary school vertically grouped students as a whanau to help with the transition process. Transition into another secondary school was offered and monitored through a vertical grouping of tuakana-teina, where the student remained within this group through the years at college. This provided opportunities for leadership roles and activities in mixed-age groupings, while helping the student form long-term relationships within the whanau. It also aided in developing and maintaining effective relationships with parents. The third secondary school also had a peer support system established for new third formers. All third formers were allocated a sixth former whom they could use for peer support. One parent whose son was part of this system thought her son found it very helpful.

> He used to have, he was a 6th or 7th former, he was his peer person, this boy called [name of student], and he really, really got on well with [name of student]. Anything that was wrong with him, if he had any problems he'd go and see him, and talk to him. And he would sort of help him, talk him around it. (English-medium secondary school parent)

The third secondary school got senior Maori students to work with junior Maori students as role models.

Academic

Homework Centre

One Maori teacher established a homework centre at the school marae, and encouraged the students to contribute to buying fish and chips after studying so that a sense of community and support was developed. He saw his next step as encouraging parents to come and help at the centre.

Saturday Classes for School Certificate Students

Parents at one kura who had children sitting School Certificate took turns holding classes on Saturdays leading up to the examinations.

Development of Oral Skills

One Pakeha primary school teacher had noticed that her children lacked oral language presentation skills as compared with children in other schools of a similar age group and some Maori children who had recently returned from the United States, so she was putting

greater emphasis on oral presentation and encouraging the children to think out loud and express themselves.

Kaupapa Tino Rangatiratanga

Tino rangatiratanga was a new subject being taught by a whanau member at one kura.

Home-School Relationship

Build Parent Support and Involvement

One primary school principal with a bilingual unit had implemented some initiatives to help build parent support in the school. Preparing the costumes for the school kapahaka group had brought forth some skilled parents. A reading programme recently introduced required parent tutors throughout the school. Through training parents for their role as tutors, the school had gained their trust and increased their confidence.

Shared Responsibility For Learning

An example of the kura's uniqueness is the shared responsibility between the home and the kura in the child's learning. The kura continues the learning from the home, and the home continues and supports the learning at the kura. For example, if the family is involved in a hui or sports events, then the kura believe it is their responsibility to support it and incorporate it in their learning programme.

Family Maths Evenings

Family maths evenings have been successful because they have encouraged parents to understand the range of concepts children learn in mathematics.

Parents as Teachers and Curriculum Designers

Waitangi day and Anzac day are school days for one kura, children and parents. After attending the early morning service at a local marae in memory of the soldiers, the children and parents return to the kura for breakfast and a day of activities planned and supported by the parents.

> Ngā akoranga a ngā tamariki hoki i ngā rā o Waitangi, o Tūmatauenga. He rā kura ērā mō tēnei whānau. Ana, i aua rā kei konei ngā mātua hoki, e huri haere ana ki te taha o ngā tamariki ki ngā momo pokapū mahi. Te rā o Tūmatauenga, rima karaka, ono karaka mātou katoa kei [te ingoa o te marae]. Kia mutu i reira, te tautoko i te taha o ngā hōia ka haere mai ki te kura, parakuihi tahi, ko ngā mātua anō ērā kei te whakareri he mahi huri haere i ngā rōpū. (Kura principal)

Kura parents contribute significantly to the curriculum for their children. This encourages parents to take responsibility for the children's learning and to ensure the

children learn what they helped set. They are more inclined to assist the kaiako or become the kaiako.

> Mehemea kua hangaia e te whānau te marautanga kei te kapohia e ngā tamariki kei a rātou te haepapa ki te āwhina i ngā kaimahi i te kura ki te whakatutuki i tēā, ki te whakaako i tēā. Nā reira ko ngā mātua kei a rātou te mōhiotanga mō tēahi kaupapa, ka haramai ko rātou kē hei kaiako. (Kura principal)

Each whanau member in one kura had a responsibility based upon their strengths, talents, skills, expertise, or interests. Different parents were responsible for swimming, music, English, hockey, media, art, transport, relieving, and liaising between the kohanga reo and kura. At the other kura every whanau member must help on an ohu or working group responsible for a part of the kura's operation. The ohu include administration, school, resources, evaluation, property (ohu whakahaere, ohu kura, ohu matapuna, ohu arotake, ohu whare whenua).

Goal Setting and Evaluation

One of the kura had begun an evaluation system whereby each parent set 6-monthly goals that would support their child's learning. If parents needed help to achieve a goal, they were expected to approach the kura, a whanau member, or teacher. One parent set a goal to read to her child for half an hour each day. She approached her child's teacher for help. She had access to the kura and town libraries, and she observed teachers reading to children to learn how to make the voice more interesting.

Physical Structure of the Kura

It was important that the parents received as many messages as possible that the kura belonged to them. Therefore the structure of the kura was designed so that there was one big room for whanau to eat and gather instead of separate rooms for the principal, secretary, and staff.

Parents as Kura Evaluators

The regular presence of parents in the kura means that they gain a greater understanding of how the school, teachers, and children are operating which puts them into a position to be able to evaluate the progress of the kura.

Motivation

School Improvement Project

One English-medium secondary school was about to begin a project focused on motivating students and working with parents to motivate students, by getting parents into the school so that the school could show them how to help their children.

Mentoring

Two secondary schools were considering the establishment of a mentoring programme for Maori students. One of the secondary schools had implemented a similar programme with 2 other secondary schools for their Pacific Islands students which had been successful. The programme involved providing students with mentors who were educated in a career path of the student's interest. Students met monthly with their mentor, sharing and talking about school, education, career options or paths, or anything they wanted. The meetings took place at school, home, workplace, and sometimes with the family. The aims of the programme were to encourage within the student and family a culture of success and achievement and a sense of being able to obtain their goals, and to show that people in those positions could relate to difficulties a student might be having and could advise on how to overcome them. Mentors could also assist with networks for students and put them in contact with other people who might be able to help. The principal noted that it took additional time, money, and thorough planning and effort to establish the programme.

Te Iho Kohine

Te Iho Kohine—a programme to build self-esteem among Maori girls—was promoted by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Donna Awatere-Huata. The associate principal in one secondary school had put a considerable amount of effort into the programme but was unsure of its value. The programme had attempted to involve staff other than the Maori teachers, but it revealed attitudes and conflict within the staff about responsibility, and the role of non-Maori staff in promoting the learning needs of Maori students. She was disappointed that she received no evaluation of the programme from the programme organisers.

Student Behaviour

Responsibility Model

One English-medium secondary school was about to introduce a programme aimed at having students take more control of and responsibility for their behaviour. Staff will be expected to facilitate the change in students' behaviour with some key questions when a student displays unacceptable behaviour towards another. Questions such as "What did you do or say?" and "What are you going to do about it?" should help put the responsibility back on to the student for his or her actions. The principal believes that staff also need to take greater responsibility for student behaviour. Part of the responsibility model will be that teachers address their teaching practices, and any changes which would improve them for students.

Peer Mediation

Peer mediation had been used successfully by one primary school teacher. Students were selected and trained to mediate conflict between children in the playground. It empowered the trained children to put positive pressure on other children. It also empowered the children to make decisions and to take more responsibility for themselves.

Smoke Busters

"Smoke Busters" is a student initiative with strong teacher support. It is based on "replacement theory" where sport and other activities are provided for students during lunch hour and breaks to keep them from "hanging out" and smoking.

Tu Tangata

Two secondary school principals had implemented the tu tangata programme in their third and fourth form classes and they perceived it to be successful. One education support officer (ESO) was allocated to each class, moving with that group of children to different classes. They worked alongside the students doing the same work, exercises, and homework with them. They also assisted with the pastoral care of the students. The programme succeeded in keeping students settled, provided a parent was present. Many of the ESOs were parents or whanau, often receiving government benefits.

Some parents were asked into the classroom to help with the behaviour of their own child. These parents did this voluntarily. But once the parent was absent, the student reverted to some of his or her old habits. Schools had difficulty getting enough parental support to have a parent in all third and fourth form classes, and in retaining this support if, for example, parents got jobs. The programme was dependent on continued funding.

One couple took turns sitting in on one class for a term to try and encourage their nephew, whom they were caring for, to remain in school and to learn. Their time was voluntary.

> I've been down there to help my nephew in the classroom and my wife here. The one that was running away we go sit in the classroom with him and make sure he does his work 'cause that effort was quite a strain.
>
> *How long did that last?* We did it for about a term and they were very supportive of us going in there with him, very supportive the school but then you had to give him that chance to improve and soon as we were out of the class, he just him and all his mates head down to [name of shopping centre] or wherever they were going.
>
> *How did he find you going to class with him?* Didn't like it especially when [name of partner] fell asleep in class 'cause she's in a wheelchair and she was in a wheelchair asleep in the front but he worked. You see it wasn't good because we wanted him to have a self-motivated attitude.

11.1

Rather than sitting there all the time. Well that's what [name of nephew] told us, he told us that he doesn't want us in the classroom when he goes back on the trial. And we want to see how it goes. It might work.

You've been down there, observed the classrooms and things like that. How have you found it? I found it good. I found the majority of kids at [name of school] actually quite well disciplined. Maybe we work in the class where all the hard nuts were, but the ones we worked in with they were responsive, it was the odd kid that would get out of hand but it was only that one or two.

How did the teacher find having you in there? Well we didn't actually hear from them, but the deputy principal did say it was like a supportive role and it then changes the whole attitude of the classroom in a positive way just having parents in there. That's what we found, but I mean, some teachers, if they didn't like it they didn't tell us or didn't complain about it 'cause I know some of them wouldn't have liked it, having people like that in their classrooms. (English-medium secondary school parent)

Another parent was put off a particular secondary school because it had a tu tangata programme; what those behind the programme perceived as support, he perceived as bullying of the children into work.

Teacher Support or Professional Development

Professional Development on Teacher Attitudes

One school was working to review and improve its learning environment. This had included professional development on teacher attitudes towards children.

> It's been the focus of the professional development for the whole year in particular but we had 2 guys who come here and they had a contract with us for a number of revisits so we have actually faced quite a lot of issues about ourselves as a staff in terms of attitudes and that is included. A lot of Maori kids, Samoan kids, and kids from Somalia. (English-medium secondary school assistant principal)

One principal felt that some of the teachers at the school lacked awareness of some pre-conditions for learning, such as being punctual, well prepared, consistent, having high expectations, taking an interest in individuals, finding points of contact with them, and the need to gain student trust.

> The crucial thing is having high expectations for all kids. Not looking at a kid and saying this little scruff, well I'll entertain them, but he's not going to be a rocket scientist. Actually there are a few rocket scientists out here, but we are not sure where they are yet. And we can't label them and we can't make assumptions, and

> not making assumptions is one of the most crucial things of this strategy you know, our behaviour as teachers and so on, so you know, we have got a lot of work to do there. (English-medium secondary school principal)

Format

"Format" is a learning styles programme. One school had chosen it with the aim of encouraging teachers to better meet the needs of students. The principal believed that many teachers were locked into particular ways of teaching that did not meet the learning needs of all the school's students, particularly the Maori students. Understanding the different ways in which people learn would encourage teachers to revisit the way in which they taught. Two secondary schools were also investigating learning styles, and one kura kaupapa Maori was using de Bono's thinking styles approach.

Te Rongomau

Another programme one kura was investigating was a values education which was not Christian or Maori based. They had heard about it from another kura, and sent one of their teachers to India to find out more about it. The teacher believed it fitted well with tikanga Maori. She was currently developing the first programme which was to be viewed by the whanau before being implemented.

de Bono

One kura teacher had recently introduced her children to de Bono's thinking style approach, after reading books and going on a course to learn about it. She pre-tested them but had not yet given them the post-test. At this stage she had limited success because the programme required the children to work on daily activities, yet she was often absent 2 days a week for principal release time and other kura-related matters.

The Magic Wand

Teachers, principals, and whanau were asked if they could wave a wand, what would they change about what was available in their school for Maori children?

The 5 most common changes principals and teachers wanted for their school that they believed would help with the education of their Maori students were:

- to have more Maori teachers, both Maori speaking and non-Maori speaking
- to have smaller classes
- to establish a bilingual unit
- to have more money available for Maori education
- to have more money available for resources that Maori children could identify with more through their experiences, or that were in the Maori language.

Table 17

Changes Principals and Teachers Would Like To Make to Their Provision for Maori Children

Money for	
Maori education	3
Resources	3
Disadvantaged children	1
Smaller classes	4
Maori	
More Maori-speaking teachers	2
More Maori teachers	2
Bilingual unit	3
Increase involvement with local marae	1
More Maori content/visibility	1
Go back 150 years and have a truly bilingual NZ	1
Parents	
Increased involvement	2
Change attitude towards bilingual education	1
Change attitude towards success being a good thing	2
Improve parenting skills	1
Students	
Change student attitude	3
Education	
Multicultural education	1
Structural changes to create a more appropriate learning environment	2
Social	
Eliminate violence in community	1
Employment for parents	2
Employment for children when they leave school	1

English-medium teachers and principals were more likely to want changes in resourcing. All 3 teachers or principals who thought there needed to be a change in student attitudes were Pakeha, as were the 2 teachers who thought that parents needed to change their attitude towards success, the principal who wanted parents to develop better parenting skills, and the teacher who wanted all cultures to be valued in school.

Whanau at kura kaupapa Maori wanted more money to be able to buy particular sports equipment such as waka ama, better availability of a variety of Maori-medium resources to purchase, Maori-speaking teachers, and more parental involvement.

Only one teacher would not do anything different for the Maori children in her class.

> Well in my own classroom I wouldn't do anything different, I've found what I do is pretty successful and I'm pretty happy with the results that I have. Perhaps I could do better, but I think I cater for their basic needs and wants and I think we all make an effort to do some Maori work whether it's just colours or counting or waiata. (Pakeha school teacher in a primary school with a bilingual unit)

Strategies Teachers Used with Maori Children

When teachers were asked whether different strategies were needed to teach Maori children, only a few English-medium and bilingual-unit teachers believed Maori used different strategies to teach Maori children. Some teachers immediately reflected on teaching and learning styles, some did not believe that Maori children should be treated differently or separately but instead needed to learn how to fit in and be a part of New Zealand, some did not believe they used different strategies but explained they did what they believed worked for children as individuals, and some incorporated content that they perceived to be more relevant or interesting for Maori children.

Different Strategies for Maori Children

Two Maori primary school teachers believed they used different teaching strategies with Maori children. One, a bilingual-unit Maori teacher used tuakana-teina and quite a bit of group work with her children because she believed they preferred working as a group. But she also emphasised the need for independence. The other, an English-medium Maori teacher was harder on the Maori children when it came to upholding and respecting tikanga Maori because it was their culture and she believed their parents would expect that at home.

Group work was acknowledged by other teachers as well.

> Lots of small group talk if we can but they are not to play. (English-medium secondary school English teacher)

Trying not to focus on Maori children but instead getting them to reflect on situations by using parallel groups of people with similar issues such as Aborigine or American Indian, or using cultural characters such as aliens, was a strategy one English-medium secondary school social studies teacher used. She believed that third formers were still gaining confidence in their own belief and values system and were very shy if singled out as a group such as Maori or Pacific Island. But at the same time she thought it important that children should have the opportunity to learn about themselves in some depth so that they knew their culture was special. This she did by starting the year with a unit on myths and legends and encouraging the students to explore a legend or myth from their culture. She also tried to create environments where children could learn in a fun way, almost without realising that they were learning.

One Maori secondary school teacher, who teaches mainly Maori children, identified some differences between her Maori and Pakeha students and found that motivation was important for her Maori students.

> A programme of motivation has to take place first. I teach only Maori children, and I think they are stunning and they are different, I mean the Pakeha children,

> I've got a group of Pakeha children in my form class, they stick out because they are polite and nicely sit down and behave and do what is expected of them. They are amongst the highest academic achievers, and do well. They are different, they have their equipment, they're focused, so I don't need to do the same things for them as I do for my others. (Maori secondary school Maori-language and -culture teacher)

Are Maori Children Different?

Some teachers of classes with mainly Maori students used different teaching strategies but said it had nothing to do with being Maori. Group work, high activity, and "hands on" activities were strategies that worked. One teacher manipulated the groups for group work so that children were mixed.

> Possibly when it comes to group work, when you've got a little bit of co-operative learning or something, I try and manipulate the groups. In that sense I try and mix people up because kids have to see other role models and how other people operate and just how much homework the next person does. Well they have to live in the same society at the end of the day, they are going to be going for the same jobs, there's no separate Maori economy out there for them or specifically Maori work places. At the end of the day, school is about teaching a number of skills of survival to equip you to compete with any other New Zealander in the workforce. I don't, never been a huge fan for treating them separately, or hugely differently. I can't see an end result for that. It's a tough question, there's been a lot of thinking about that one, and I've sort of developed a personal philosophy along those lines. They should be driving as many BMWs in proportion to the other part of the population as anyone else. (English-medium Pakeha social studies secondary school teacher)

A couple of teachers were unsure just how different Maori children were, if they were at all, because they had much the same background as any other child raised in New Zealand. They thought that any differences were due to socioeconomic status or individual differences in their home background.

One principal was reluctant to embark on programmes which could identify his school as catering for Maori. In the competitive environment in which self-managing schools now exist, he felt he had to give priority to attracting other students.

> We don't have the tu tangata programme. Actually I better tell you something, it was a conscious decision of mine not to take the tu tangata programme. I read about it, I saw what it did. This school has been in a declining roll situation, and it is my experience that what tu tangata does, is a lot of involvement and a lot of help and support but it sends another signal to the competing communities which is that school needs that sort of support. And the rolls dropped. Tu tangata schools have suffered roll drops, and I don't want another roll drop. So there is another signal that goes out, if you implement that.

[Name of previous deputy principal] would be able to tell you that that is one of the things that I've done that she doesn't like at all. But I still believe I'm right for the health of the school. I consciously have changed some things. And [name of previous deputy principal] commented to me that we are not celebrating things Maori. She's commented on it, am I debrowning the school. Now I personally don't, I'm not trying to, because on here [the school prospectus] you've still got your 'Nau Mai, Haere Mai', you've still got a representation of our kids, there is [name of Maori child]. This is our senior exec, here is [name of Maori child], she is on one of those lists that you've got. What I admit to doing is not exaggerating it, not using it as the feature article.

What I am trying to do is sell the school to everybody, because if we are seen as being successful, everyone will come back and that will include Maori kids. And I believe the only way to break down racial barriers is to have the public come to public schools, mix them—intermingle, play rugby and soccer and tennis together, go to class together and study together and become friends. That's the real, the only way to break down all these barriers.

But I did take away the odd sign that made it so obviously obvious, that we are a predominantly Maori school and I have upset one or two in doing that. I am trying to present an image of success, and sort of well-off-ness, that poverty is not a problem, so I am addressing those sorts of issues. I've talked with my teachers to say look I'd like you to set up a kapa haka group, I will come and support it and the first few nights I went along to get it going and if they are good I will use them when we do anything on stage, but if they're not good I won't. So I only want to have things that are good, now I don't care if that's European or Non-European or Maori or what, I don't want it there if it's not good.

In our entrance way now, when you go in there is this little sign that says enter in English, and on the other side it says it in Maori and as you come out of the hall there is a wee sign on the back side of that sign that says depart in English this side and it's in Maori on that side. So I have it there, but I haven't done it in a big thing and I haven't done a whole lot of the more obvious things that for some people is too in your face, because I am actually trying to attract everybody, I'm not deliberately trying to attract just one branch more than the other. They didn't appreciate that for some people there was another message that went out with that colour, and that colour was used for I don't know 10 years, and it is funny because I didn't twig, when I first read it, I actually thought it was nice, you see [name of mountain range], look up to the hills, the marae is there, and it is called [name of marae] which means place of shelter, and when you look at where it is set in the hills here, you do feel it's a place of shelter, and the Maori kids need too often to seek a place of shelter. See there is a wee fantail, which is one of the things on our crest, a wee fantail, and talks about the bush we own that hill, we've got a marvellous setting, we've got an absolutely glorious marae, and so when I read all this I thought this is marvellous, I love it, but it was actually pointed out to me by others that we think that this has been the problem for the school. I've moved with it, and once we are at a position of strength, we will be able to go back to doing this, once people know that when you go there you achieve, you know? Then we can celebrate this a bit more again, that is my belief. Now

another person might see it differently but I had to bring this school back to life it had 11 consecutive years of roll decline, I had to turn it around. And the school roll is starting to grow again. (English-medium secondary school principal)

Summary

There were conscious initiatives in each of the study schools aimed at improving Maori achievement, although not all were identified as being more for Maori than for other students. Some of the reasons for this lack of specificity are that school-wide changes are often needed to improve schools, and that there is still tension in many schools about seeming to cater more for one group of students than another, or, more healthily, seeming to single them out as the group which needs additional help, which is "failing".

This study did not attempt to examine the impact of the initiatives which principals, teachers, and whanau spoke to us about. It would be very valuable if some of the initiatives reported were followed up, and those which are sustainable and which do make a noticeable difference for Maori students, are widely reported so that people in schools have some guidance and inspiration.

Teachers and principals of English-medium schools were more inclined than bilingual unit and kura kaupapa Maori teachers and principals to want to include more Maori content—to *incorporate* an acknowledgment of Maori culture into their existing programmes.

Some schools which had tried to go further than incorporation by *adding on* bilingual units had struck problems, through a lack of appropriate teachers and of money to resource such programmes. Bilingual-unit programmes were also perceived differently by Maori and Pakeha teachers other than principals. Maori teachers believed they were successful, but some Pakeha teachers perceived them as divisive in nature, creating a group that was separate from the rest of the school. This raises important questions about how schools can cater successfully for different groups of students, if equality of opportunity is equated with uniformity, and if additional resourcing is having to come from funds which are already over-stretched.

Kura kaupapa Maori devoted most attention to and made most use of the home-school relationship, not even conceptualising it as such, since the holistic approach does not separate out home and school as distinct spheres. Motivation and behaviour did not seem to be the problems that they were in English-medium schools, whether or not they had bilingual units.

9 PARENTAL CONCERNS

Introduction

> Generally, Maori throughout the education system and in the communities served by this system want more say in what goes on. This is mainly about the system responding better and more quickly to Maori concerns; Maori taking more control of their own education; and more recognition of the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi as a way to strengthen education for Maori. (Ministry of Education & Te Puni Kōkiri, 1998, p. 5)

The response to Maori parents' concerns is important at all levels of the education system: class level, school level, and government policy level. Maori parents raised concerns at all 3 levels in this study, and three-quarters of them had had at least one concern related to their child's education over the past year. Most of the rest of the parents had also had concerns in previous years.

Most of the parental concerns were immediate, related to their child's progress and class experiences.

Parents' Concerns

We asked parents if they had any concerns about their child's education over the past year. Table 18 shows that English-medium primary school parents were least likely to have a concern about their child's education.

Table 18

Maori Parents' Concerns about Their Children's Education

	English-medium		Bilingual-unit		Kura	
	Primary School (n = 21)	Secondary School (n = 30)	Primary School (n = 6)	Secondary School (n = 6)	Kaupapa Maori (n = 18)	TOTAL (n = 81)
Number of parent with concerns	9	26	6	3	18	62
Number of parents with no concerns	12	4	-	3	-	19
Number of concerns	13	50	12	9	36	120

If we consider only those parents who had concerns and the number of concerns per group, then the bilingual-unit secondary school parents had the highest rate of concerns, with a ratio of 3:1 (3 concerns per parent). This group was followed by kura kaupapa Maori and bilingual-unit primary school parents with a ratio of 2:1 (2 concerns per parent), followed by English-medium secondary school parents with 1.6:1 (1.6 concerns per parent), bilingual-unit secondary school parents with 1.5:1 (1.5 concerns per parent) and English-medium primary school parents with a ratio of 0.6:1 (0.6 of a concern per parent).

Parents' concerns could be grouped into the following categories: child's progress and curriculum opportunity; the quality of, or relationship with, the child's teacher; the child's social wellbeing; home support and school or government policy.

Child's Progress and Curriculum Opportunities

In terms of the child's progress and curriculum opportunities, English-medium secondary school parents were those most concerned about their child's poor progress, or their attitude to school work. Kura kaupapa Maori parents showed most concern about the curriculum opportunities, with some concerned about English-language literacy, and the lack of subject variety.

Table 19

Parental Concerns—Child's Progress and Curriculum Opportunities

	English-medium		Bilingual-unit		Kura
	Primary School (n = 21)	Secondary School (n = 30)	Primary School (n = 6)	Secondary School (n = 6)	Kaupapa Maori (n = 18)
Poor progress of the child	1	5	2	-	-
Child wanted to change subjects	-	1	1	-	-
Child not working to his/her potential	-	1	-	-	-
Lack of subject variety	-	1	-	1	5
Teachers not catering to the needs of the child	-	-	2	1	-
English-language literacy skills	-	-	1	2	8
Grammatically incorrect Maori language	-	-	-	-	2
Child more capable than peers and called on to help	-	-	-	-	1
Child's attitude towards school work	1	6	-	1	-
Group total	2	14	6	5	16

Child's Teachers

Concerns related to the child's teachers were most evident for parents in English-medium secondary schools, and bilingual units, whether primary or secondary.

Table 20

Parental Concerns—Teacher

	English-medium		Bilingual-unit		Kura
	Primary School (n = 21)	Secondary School (n = 30)	Primary School (n = 6)	Secondary School (n = 6)	Kaupapa Maori (n = 18)
Teacher behaviour or attitude	3	6	3	2	-
Low expectations of the teacher	-	1	-	-	-
Teacher not catering for the needs of the child	2	5	-	-	3
Burnt-out teachers	-	-	-	-	1
Lack of male teachers as role models	-	-	-	-	2
Group total	5	12	3	2	6

> Unless you did everything for her and everything for the Unit, I'm just assuming, you could be number one parent with her, but if you didn't . . . It's sad because

my husband's a very fluent speaker and we wanted both kids to go through that Unit. With my discussion with her on that day, she started going on about that homework and I turned around and explained to her that he was away and she could have made sure he got his homework for the holidays. She carried on about how he doesn't do his other homework. Well I pulled her up and said, 'I think you're wrong because I sit with him. I don't do Maori but I sit with him so don't you tell me my child doesn't do homework.' She said 'He doesn't hand it in.' I asked him straight away. I pulled him in with us. I said 'Why aren't you handing it in?' He said 'It's because she puts us down in front of everybody.' If there's something wrong, she'll rubbish him right there and then. I thought oh well, he has to pull out. It was sad, because she is good in her own way. She is a lovely person. Personally she's nice, I got on with her quite well, but when it comes to teaching, the attitude . . . (English-medium secondary school parent)

It was the counsellor that had brought him home this particular time and he explained to me what had happened with this particular teacher. And it just sounded to me like 'Oh yes, you know I'm the adult, you're the kid, I'm right, you're wrong, you just do it.' I said to the counsellor 'My kids have been taught that if they feel that they've been put down or spoken down to then they can stand their ground', which he kind of did without being physically or verbally threatening but just stating what it means for you and certainly that's what he was doing and this teacher found it very difficult to have in the class. I mean part of it is him but then the other part is the teacher too and I believe, well, you're in that position, then you need to learn particular skills working with adolescents. I mean it's not the easiest profession to be working in, but you choose to be there, so if you don't know how to deal with our kids then you go away and do some course. 'Cause certainly we're prepared to do our part and do the supporting of our children but I also believe they need to do theirs too. (English-medium secondary school parent)

The attitude of older Maori teachers towards their children and towards them as parents was also a concern for some parents. The attitude makes it hard for parents to approach them to discuss their concerns.

There is with one of them, with a particular teacher. She's been there for so long and I think that's what it is, she's been there too long. She's set in her own ways, she doesn't want to know anything else. I mean I remember last year when I first approached her about a concern with our own son, she said to me, 'Well if you've got a problem, come to a hui and voice it there.' I said 'But you never have a hui and I am voicing it now. I want to know what your solution is to my problem.' I honestly feel that our Maori teachers don't make it easy for our Maori parents to approach them. They could make it a lot easier. Also our Maori parents need to have a bit of oomph there and really go and fight for what they think—they have got a genuine concern about their child. That's their child. That's not the

school's child. That's your child. I don't know what it is, a lot of them aren't doing that. (English-medium secondary school parent)

Some parents felt teachers were not catering for their child's individual needs.

> How I look at it, they're not catering for the slow ones. If you wrote something up on the board and he had to copy it, he would write every word there and every word correctly spelt so he would be looking up all the time. He has a reading ability of . . . I think he's about a year behind. Plus his writing is very slow and what's been happening, because he's slow, I'm trying to speed him up but it's not working, he's actually being left behind and it's being rubbed off and he hasn't completed it. So I get that in his report. [Name of child] is not completing this, this and this. I've spoken to teachers explaining what he's like. I've said he's a child that, he wants to complete it, and like a project, he won't carry on . . . he's got a mouth and he talks in class which doesn't help, so it's not again just him or the teacher. But I feel they're not catering for him. I have been approached about putting him in the cabbage class. (English-medium secondary school parent)

> Instead of grouping, instead of talking about the individuality of each student, maybe be honest about it and do it instead of one minute 'Oh each is an individual' and all of a sudden they're all in this big melting pot. Either you're going to treat them as an individual and acknowledge them as that and maybe look at their learning specifically to their needs, which I'm a bit fond of, instead of being grouped up in one melting pot. So what's good for one individual is good for all students. I prefer individual type of education for what that kid wants. One teacher told me that he's only there to deliver the lesson, he's not there to discipline or whatever, and I suppose that's why he always had a hard time with all the kids in the class, he just spat that out, that he's just there to purely deliver the message and if the kids catch it or not well that's up to them. That may be okay for students who are capable of learning that way, that are capable of setting themselves up to do the learning, but then the majority of them may not be capable of that sort of learning. (Bilingual-unit secondary school parent)

Wellbeing—Behaviour and Friendships

About a fifth of the English-medium secondary school parents noted that teachers were concerned about their child's behaviour. Some bilingual-unit parents also expressed their own concerns about their child's behaviour and friendships.

Table 21

Parental Concerns—Child's Social Wellbeing

	English-medium		Bilingual-unit		Kura
	Primary School (n=21)	Secondary School (n=30)	Primary School (n=6)	Secondary School (n=6)	Kaupapa Maori (n=18)
Social concerns such as boys, friends, disruptive behaviour	-	1	2	1	-
Stealing	-	1	-	-	-
Bullying	-	2	-	-	-
Teacher concerned with child's absences	-	1	-	1	-
Teacher concerned with child's behaviour	-	6	-	-	-
Group total	0	11	2	2	0

Some parents were concerned that their children had a bad attitude towards their school work or particular teachers. Children sometimes formed this attitude as a result of teachers' behaviour or attitude towards them. The child's behaviour at school became a concern for the parent when the teacher drew their attention to it. These parents knew what their child could be like so when teachers or schools approached them they were not necessarily surprised at the school's concern but shared the concern with the school. While the parents did not condone their child's misbehaviour, they thought it was probably prompted by some other action or that the teacher did not know how best to work with their child.

> There's always two sides to each story. I mean if someone's rocking after a period of time then something must have been within the environment to get them to rock in the first place, so instead of taking one component I like to have a look at the whole picture and if that involves the teacher who may have said something then maybe the teacher needs to consider their actions, how they behave. I always believe, we all have attitudes, including teachers, and sometimes some of them have been in there for a long time and maybe they're a bit stale and need up-skilling or maybe need to get out. (Bilingual-unit secondary school parent)

Parents asked to visit school for their child's misbehaviour did not always like the way in which the meeting was conducted for a number of reasons: poor communication, weak solutions, and poor follow-up and feedback.

Home Support

Homework was the main theme of the concerns related to home support. A few parents whose children attended English-medium secondary schools and some whose children attended kura kaupapa Maori felt unable to provide their children with the help they thought they should be able to give.

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Table 22

Parental Concerns—Home Support

	English-medium		Bilingual-unit		Kura
	Primary School (n=21)	Secondary School (n=30)	Primary School (n=6)	Secondary School (n=6)	Kaupapa Maori (n=18)
Parent can't help with homework	-	3	1	-	2
Child not given enough homework	2	-	-	-	1
Child not doing homework	-	3	-	-	-
Parents' employment precludes help	-	1	-	-	1
Child leaving homework to last minute	-	-	-	-	1
Group total	2	7	1	0	4

School Policies

School policies were not a major parental concern compared with their child's progress, curriculum opportunities, or their child's behaviour. Clear descriptions of some of the policy areas that did concern secondary school parents were not available. A few primary school parents had been keen to have their child in a bilingual-unit, and some of the kura parental concerns related to resourcing of kura.

Table 23

Parental Concerns—School Policies

	English-medium		Bilingual-unit		Kura
	Primary School (n=21)	Secondary School (n=30)	Primary School (n=6)	Secondary School (n=6)	Kaupapa Maori (n=18)
Parent interviews too brief	1	-	-	-	-
Parent wanted child in bilingual unit	2	-	-	-	-
School policy (unspecified)	-	4	-	-	-
The incorrect year scheme for bursary Maori taught	-	1	-	-	-
Satellite schools increasing the workload for kura staff	-	-	-	-	2
No pay differential for teaching staff	-	-	-	-	2
Whanau hui in Maori only	-	-	-	-	1
Not being told about a problem till it is raised at a whanau hui	-	-	-	-	1
Isolation of the kura from other kura limits social and sporting interaction	-	-	-	-	1
Group total	3	5	0	0	7

Government Policy

Resources for schools and government lack of support for the use of Maori in everyday life were the main themes of the few parents who raised concerns related to government policies.

Table 24

Parental Concerns—Government Policy

	English-medium		Bilingual-unit		Kura
	Primary School (n=21)	Secondary School (n=30)	Primary School (n=6)	Secondary School (n=6)	Kaupapa Maori (n=18)
School funding cuts	1	1	-	-	-
Lack of resources	-	-	-	-	1
The lack of opportunity to speak Maori outside school	-	-	-	-	2
Group total	1	1	0	0	3

Parental Action on Concerns

English-medium Schools

Sixty-three concerns were raised by 33 parents whose children attended English-medium schools. Fifty of these 63 concerns came from secondary school parents.

The majority (17) were concerned with their child's social wellbeing, followed by some aspect they disliked about the teacher (12). Parents were also concerned with some aspect of their child's progress, or the curriculum (8) and homework (7).

Parents did contact the school or work with their child for most of these concerns (78 percent). Parents were happy with the outcome in around half of these cases.

The main types of action taken by English-medium secondary school parents included:

- approaching the principal, deputy principal, or dean (14)
- approaching their child's teacher (13).

Other types of actions included:

- complaining to the teacher (7)
- changing schools (4)
- asking the teacher for help (3)
- working or speaking with the child at home (3)
- changing class (1)
- encouraging child to attend the homework club (1)
- parent taking a course to assist with working with their child (1).

Two parents wanted to get extra tuition for their child but finding the money to do it was a problem.

Approaching the principal, deputy principal, or dean produced the least satisfying results for parents. Only one parent out of 14 was satisfied with this type of action. Approaching the teacher was also quite unsatisfactory for parents. Four of the 13 parents were satisfied, 6 were unsatisfied, and 3 parents were both satisfied and unsatisfied with this type of action.

The other types of action taken appeared to achieve better results. Thirteen of the 18 parents who took another type of action were happy with the outcome. Five of the 7 parents who took complaints to their child's teacher, as opposed to simply raising the matter with them, were satisfied with the results of their action.

English-medium secondary school parents were the group least satisfied with the results of action they took related to any concerns they had about their child's education.

Bilingual-unit Parents

The main concerns for this group of parents were the behaviour or attitude of the teacher towards the child, the teacher not catering for the needs of their child, English-language literacy skills, or social concerns such as peer pressure.

The 6 primary school bilingual-unit parents had 12 concerns; no action was taken on 3 of these concerns. Twelve actions were taken on the other 9 concerns. Parents were happy with the outcome of 10 of the actions. The interviewer was unsure about the level of satisfaction on 2 of the actions. Primary school bilingual-unit parents were more likely than any other group to be most satisfied with the action they took for their concerns.

Three secondary school bilingual-unit parents did not have any concerns for their child's education. The other 3 had 9 concerns and parents acted on 7 of these. Parents were satisfied with the outcome of 3 of the actions taken. Like the English-medium secondary school parents, bilingual-unit parents were least satisfied with the outcome of the action taken with speaking to the principal, deputy principal, or dean; only one parent was happy with this type of action. Two parents were pleased with the outcome of their action in working at home with their child's English-language literacy development.

Kura Kaupapa Maori Parents

The main concerns for parents with children at kura kaupapa Maori were English-language literacy skills, and the limited range of subjects available. Some kura kaupapa Maori and bilingual-unit parents shared concern about the development of their children's English-language literacy skills, although kura parents were more concerned that the child should develop in and through the Maori language. Concern about English-language literacy skills was expressed by 8 parents in all levels of the kura including wharekura.

The parents raised 36 concerns in total. They took no action on 6 of the concerns. Of the 23 actions taken on the 30 remaining concerns, they were happy with the outcome of 11 of those actions the level of satisfaction was unknown. Parents were unhappy with the outcome of 10 of the actions taken, and for 2 actions the level of satisfaction was unknown. The types of action taken by kura parents were approaching the teacher, taking their concern to a whanau hui, or taking some type of action in the home such as teaching English-language literacy skills or role modelling correct Maori language.

In deciding what action to take with their concerns they considered one of a number of factors: whether it was a personal concern or a school wide issue, the impact it was having on their child's education or other children's education, and the possible perception of

others towards the issue. One issue raised at a whanau hui had a parent considering whether she was being selfish or not in wanting to oppose it. She decided she was thinking about the possible ramifications for her child only and that the benefits for other children would make it worth supporting. Another factor parents considered was their ability and confidence to express themselves in the Maori language as whanau hui were carried out in the Maori language. If it was a concern that directly affected their child, such as bullying or the child's progress, there appeared to be no hesitation in raising it with the child's teacher. Raising a concern for kura parents is part of the process of kura kaupapa Maori and an indication that they are engaging in their children's education.

It is also evident that even the most involved parent does not necessarily get what they want.

Lack of Subject Variety

Lack of subject variety was only a concern for kura kaupapa Maori parents. Wharekura parents and some children were concerned that they were not able to take subjects that would help them with their future preferred employment. One child wanted to take human biology (the child wanted to be a pathologist), and some children also mentioned others subjects of interest such as the Spanish language. The whanau was constantly exploring avenues to meet the needs of the children in regard to subject choice. Some parents made the decision with their child to attend other secondary schools because of the lack of subject choice. Some parents of middle and senior primary school students at one kura were concerned that their children were not receiving a balanced curriculum. They thought that there was not enough emphasis on literacy skills for reading and writing, and a little too much emphasis on tikanga Maori.

Communication

Communication between the school and the home emerged as a key factor behind some parental concerns and whether there was a successful resolution to their concerns. This was particularly so at secondary school. School events, activities, and parent-teacher interviews were not always known about because the newsletter either did not get to the parent or was found or received after the event had taken place.

Clear communication between the teacher, parent, and child was important for parents.

> I think really good especially the teacher-parent interviews and the children come along so I find those situations could be because they're talking to my child and I'm listening to what they are saying and then I have when they speak to me and my child is listening, no one (as in the parent, teacher, and child) has been separated so we all know exactly what's been said and I can voice whatever I want, she can voice whatever she wants and the teacher, I find it really good. (English-medium secondary school parent)

Resolution of Concerns

Many parents wanted to know about school concerns with their child as early as possible before the reason for it became too big to resolve. School systems for monitoring detentions or referrals and informing parents were not always successful.

> We hadn't picked up on the detention slips coming home until they [the school counsellor on behalf of the school] brought him home and then we went and had a meeting with them. (English-medium secondary school parent)

Many parents heard only negative comments about their child; they also wanted to hear positive comments about their child's progress.

If they were called to the school because the school had a concern, parents expected the matter to be of real concern. They thought that wearing an incorrect school uniform or part uniform was not a matter for great concern considering the more serious difficulties students can have. Some parents were pleased that they managed to keep their child at school each day.

> I had notes being sent home about his behaviour and wearing the wrong socks for his school uniform. What does a uniform have to do with it? At least he's there [at school]. (English-medium secondary school parent)

> We've been getting these detention forms from [name of child] or him being deferred out I think they called it and some of it was to do with not having uniform which I thought was a bit pathetic, and I thought it was very punitive and I wrote a letter to the headmaster. His response was that as parents when you come into this school that there is a certain protocol and criteria and you agree to accept all that, and I think well, that's really good and fine, but I also agree to accept that my kid will get the best schooling too. And presently some of those teachers are not performing, so it's interesting. (English-medium secondary school parent)

> They changed the uniform, and of course the socks, they were different socks and the polo shirts had gone from blue to white. So anyway I didn't know so popped [name of child] away to school and he brought a letter back from the school, saying that he was wearing inappropriate uniform. So I rang up to the school and spoke to Mr [name of principal] and told him that had I been notified, I mean they know the kids' names and addresses of the kids that are going to their school that are starting that following year, because they get enrolled. Now it was blue and white. The shorts were fifty something dollars a pair and the polo tops were $35 each and the socks were $11 a pair. And I thought well there's absolutely no way that I've got the money to go out and get those and I said 'Incidentally I should have been notified.' And he goes 'Oh well we don't have to notify.' And I said, 'Well you must know yourself that a majority of the people get the kids' uniform before Christmas.' And he just would not, he just said 'You've got two

> choices, you either get him an acceptable uniform or you don't send him to school.' And I said, 'Fine I won't send him to school.' And he said 'Well that's your prerogative', and I said, 'No, that's yours.' I said 'Two or three weeks without a uniform is not going to kill him.' And he said 'I'm sorry, it's not acceptable.' (English-medium secondary school parent)

Consequently the child stayed home, and missed out on the first 2 weeks of school.

School Meetings with Parents

Communication needed to be honest, direct, and clear. Parents sometimes felt that principals, deans, or deputy principals used long words and "spoke down to them". Some agreed that the more contact they had with school staff, the better the communication became, and they felt they were on "an even field" and a first-name basis. However, the preferred way of communication (honest, direct, and clear) needed to happen at the first meeting.

School staff appearing to making assumptions about them also annoyed parents: for example, assumptions that Maori parents did not care about their child's education, or that an unemployed father would not help with homework.

> I would have to say I wasn't all that comfortable. I thought they made a lot of judgments, like automatically they said, 'Did mum help you with your homework?' and [name of child] said 'Well no dad does'. So to me it's like well where are you getting this information to say what you're saying and because they know that I'm a teacher down here. Because [name of child] said 'Oh well my dad doesn't work.' So obviously there was a judgment being made. There is that but also the way in which they I suppose spoke to [name of child] which was very coercive and then I said to them that 'You're putting words in his mouth, ask the question in an open way not in a directing way.' I said because one of my jobs of assessment is knowing how to ask questions and the kind of answers I want and I said 'You're asking closed questions.' I said 'You need to ask that in another way that allows him to say what it is'.
>
> Initially [their response was] very defensive but then I could understand that because who wants a know-all parent coming in here and kind of sussing you out straight away. But I think afterwards they kind of loosened up a bit because they realised that we do have [name of child's] education at heart, it's really important to us. But it goes back to this thing, you know, it's like Maori parents don't think that much of their kids, not supportive I mean that's the kind of sense that I got, it was a bit patronising at the beginning and they directed everything at me and well [name of partner's] quite happy to sit there. (English-medium secondary school parent)

Communication also needed to be respectful of both the parents and child concerned. Parents gave examples where the principal, dean, or deputy principal spoke to the child in such a way that the child felt backed into a corner and became defensive, or they spoke to

the parent as if the child were not present. A different approach made a difference for this parent.

> He [the deputy principal] said, 'Would you like to come and talk to me, or would you like me to talk to [name of child]?' So he spoke to [name of child] and they sorted it out. That's without me having to go down to the school. Different approach, it's like he spoke to [name of child] because the problem was with [name of child]. I mean I don't think any kid likes to be told they have to go to a meeting with their mother. With [name of child] they were saying, well he does this he does that, they're talking about him like he's not there. But [name of deputy principal] actually talks to the person. (English-medium secondary school parent)

Admitting when one is wrong or that an incident could have been approached differently is important for both schools and parents in honest communication. It helps to build trust for future communication.

> They know what he's like. We only had one real [concern]. It wasn't very bad, but just when he gets into a mood he's best left alone and he'll come out of it. Once he had a teacher that sort of just kept on at him and of course he just got worse and that just sort of escalated into something, even the principal down there, he says that it should have been handled a lot differently. (English-medium secondary school parent)

Finding Solutions

Meetings with parents needed to be purposeful, constructive, and solution oriented. Some parents felt they were expected to have a solution to their child's behaviour, yet felt even more helpless because they did not have one. Parents were sometimes unhappy with the outcome of a meeting as there was often no real solution, or the parents did not believe that the school had acknowledged its responsibility. Parents expected the school to meet them half way: a child should not misbehave or behave disrespectfully towards teachers, but teachers needed to focus on children's learning needs which meant discovering what worked best for particular individuals. Parents believed that if children's perceived needs were being met in a positive environment, behaviour problems would not arise.

Monitoring and Feedback

According to the parents, monitoring the proposed solution did not always go well, and the solution itself was not always successful.

> Well all they used to do was ask me what did I think they should do for him. And I would just say, 'Well he wants to be there [at school] because when I used to talk to him, he says he still wants to be there at school.' But the teachers who didn't like to teach him, they would tell me what they thought they should do.

> 'We'll stick him on daily report and see how he goes', and that was it. Only at the end of those daily reports, I think I have seen one maybe once. They would stick him on daily report and all that sort of stuff. Teachers write their comments and they see how he goes at the end of the week. But that was all they used to do until the teachers had so much of [name of child] that they don't want him at school any more. (English-medium secondary school parent in a school with a bilingual unit)

The solution or agreed course of action needed to be monitored and revised regularly for progress and acknowledgment of that progress, or if it did not work, there needed to be discussion and another strategy developed.

Parents wanted to hear positive comments, and to see teachers focused on the child's learning needs, rather than seeming to focus on behaviour, and taking an interest in the whole whanau.

> When my kids were at the other school [the kura kaupapa Maori], the majority of the time, I always seemed to get positive comments. They would say, they are a bit of a tutu but to me they always focused on the positive. Whereas in the mainstream, especially this year, with my young one, I find they focus too much on the behaviour instead of the learning and I found that the kura kaupapa that they were more focused, that there was that behaviour issue, but they focused on what the child was actually capable of doing and I always found them to always have positive comments when I used to bump into them. I'm not saying that all Maori teachers are wonderful or whatever, but I just feel that like maybe with Maori teachers, like at kura kaupapa, that they are more understanding of our educational situation and are wanting to help out the parents as well to achieve higher levels in education. And I found that encouraging even for myself as a parent and furthering my own education and my adult life. (Bilingual-unit secondary school parent)

Summary

Most Maori parents have a concern at some stage with their child's education. There were some different patterns related to the kind of school they had chosen for their child. The teacher concerned with the child's behaviour or not catering for the needs of the child, and the child's attitude towards school, were concerns that only English-medium parents had. English-medium and bilingual-unit secondary school parents were both concerned with the teacher's behaviour or attitude towards the child, and the poor progress of the child. Bilingual-unit and kura kaupapa Maori parents were concerned with English-language literacy of their children, while only kura kaupapa Maori parents were concerned with the lack of subject variety.

The number of concerns and the type of concerns are a clear indication that Maori parents are concerned about their child's education. They understand that, when a concern arises, school, home, and child need to be involved in resolving it. They expect guidance

and help from the school but want to be treated fairly and respectfully in the process. They need to feel as if they can approach the school about any matter and do not want judgments made about them. Parents agree that communication is the key to resolving concerns effectively.

The group most satisfied with home-school communication were kura kaupapa Maori parents (17 of 18), followed by English-medium primary school parents with 17 (of 21) satisfied parents. English-medium secondary school parents were more likely to be dissatisfied with home-school communications than any other group.

10 HOME SUPPORT

This chapter covers parents' perceptions of their role in supporting their child at home, and the difficulties they have in providing that support; principals' and teachers' perspectives of what type of support they expect parents to be providing; and, since homework featured prominently in parents' perceptions about home support, children's perceptions of homework.

Parents' Perspectives on Their Role in Their Child's Education

General Perceptions

Homework featured prominently, but parents also saw importance in encouraging their children and providing them with opportunities.

English-medium School Parents

Monitoring their child's homework was the most important role for English-medium parents at both primary and secondary school level. Providing the best opportunities possible in their education was perceived by secondary school parents as the second most important role. Both primary and secondary school parents believed it was important to get the child into a good routine at home, to role model good learning and behaviour, and to spend time with the child.

Encouraging their child to read was important to primary school parents, while secondary school parents were concerned with encouraging their child to learn. Primary school parents also believed it their responsibility to get their child to school safely, and ready to learn.

Bilingual-unit Parents

Monitoring homework, getting the child to school on time and ready to learn, and providing them with the best opportunities possible were the important roles for bilingual-unit parents. Primary school parents also saw it as their role to encourage learning, encourage their child to read, spend time with their child, make sure their child received an education, instil confidence, get them to and from school safely, and teach them right from wrong.

Kura Kaupapa Maori Parents

The most important aspects of home support for kura kaupapa Maori parents "included providing the best opportunity possible in their education, monitoring homework, role modelling good learning and behaviour, and providing routine". Providing support outside school for English and making sure their child received an education were also important. Surprisingly, speaking Maori at home to the child was suggested by only 3 kura parents as

being an important part of their role. This was as important to kura kaupapa Maori parents as providing their child with books, reading to the child, spending time with the child, and taking their child to the library.

Table 25

Home Support Provided by Parents for Their Child

	English-medium		Bilingual-unit		Kura
	Primary School (n = 21)	Secondary School (n = 29)	Primary School (n = 5)	Secondary School (n = 5)	Kaupapa Maori (n = 17)
Academic and Curriculum					
Monitor homework	12	21	3	2	5
Give child homework	1	-	-	-	2
Help with research	-	-	-	-	1
English literacy skills	-	-	-	-	4
Speak Maori	-	-	-	-	3
Sub total	13	21	3	2	15
Home Resources					
Provide equipment	-	1	-	-	-
Provide books	-	-	-	-	1
Provide a computer	-	-	-	-	3
Provide extra tuition	-	-	-	-	1
Education account	1	-	-	-	-
Finance private education	2	-	1	-	-
Make sure they get an education	1	2	2	-	4
Give them the best opportunities possible	2	12	3	2	6
Sub total	6	15	6	2	15
Motivation and Encouragement					
Assist child in goal setting	-	-	-	1	-
Instil confidence	1	-	2	1	-
Read to child	-	-	-	-	3
Encourage child to read	5	2	2	-	-
Encourage child to learn	2	6	1	-	2
Spend time with child	5	4	2	-	3
Take child to the library	2	2	1	-	3
Take child to kapahaka	2	-	-	-	-
Provide home activities	-	-	-	-	1
Stimulate child with education games	2	-	-	-	1
Sub total	19	14	8	2	13
Social Wellbeing					
Get child to school fed, on time, and ready to learn	6	2	3	2	1
Get child to and from school safely	4	-	2	1	1
Provide emotional support	2	3	1	-	-
Provide role model learning, behaviour, etc.	4	6	1	1	5
Provide routing	5	4	2	1	5
Teach right from wrong	4	2	3	-	-
Sub total	25	17	12	5	12

Some parents who thought it was important to provide their child with a computer did not have the resources to do so at the time of the interview. However, they had plans in place to provide one within a year or two of the interview.

Homework

Monitoring homework featured prominently in parents' views of the support they gave their children's learning. Homework diaries were part of policy at 3 of 6 secondary schools, but because the child left the homework until the last night, or did not ask for help, sending a child to his or her room to do the homework was not enough. Some parents did not realise children were not doing homework until they received a letter from the school, by which time their child had slipped behind considerably. If children were having difficulty understanding the work at school, they were often having difficulty with their homework. Although a parent's ability to help with homework was not always dependent on formal qualifications, those parents who had formal qualifications were more likely to feel confident about helping with homework.

Children's Perceptions of Homework

The majority of primary and secondary school children received homework. English-medium and bilingual-unit primary school children often received spelling, reading, or mathematics homework; a few also had topic or project work. Kura kaupapa Maori children received mathematics, writing, and translation work.

Secondary school students received a wider range of homework. English-medium students received mostly what they perceived to be revision work, or work they were not able to complete in class. Kura kaupapa Maori students believed that the homework they received was mostly new work and some revision, but according to their teachers it was revision homework. English-medium secondary school students received homework mainly in the curriculum areas of English, mathematics, and science, while Maori was the only curriculum area in which bilingual-unit students received homework. Kura kaupapa Maori secondary school students received homework in mathematics, science, English, and Maori.

Half the children reported that their parents helped guide them through their homework by asking questions, giving examples, and helping interpret the questions. Other ways mentioned by one or two students each were testing spelling words, correcting written language, providing books, searching the internet, and helping with translating material from English to Maori and Maori to English. Fathers were just as likely as mothers to help.

Other sources of help for homework included older siblings (16 students), a teacher (8 students), and others such as an uncle, aunty, grandparent, or neighbour (7 students). The teacher was most commonly used by English-medium secondary school students (6 students). Two wharekura students were the only ones who mentioned that they would

phone their teacher at home if they needed help. Only 2 students (English-medium secondary school) reported not having anyone to approach if they needed help with their homework.

Three-quarters of the English-medium and bilingual-unit primary school and all the kura kaupapa Maori parents were confident that their support of their child's homework was helpful, but only half of the English-medium and bilingual-unit secondary school parents thought their homework assistance was helpful to their child.

English-medium and bilingual-unit primary school children generally liked their homework and felt able to do it without any bother. Being able to do the homework was the reason 5 students liked their homework, and for 3 it was also an opportunity for the family to join in. Other reasons for liking homework were because it was interesting, the work varied, children liked doing homework with friends, it was something to do when bored, it was like working at school, it was fun, helped them learn, and allowed them to practise so that their school work improved.

Kura kaupapa Maori students also liked homework because there was a variety of work (6 students), the work was interesting or enjoyable, achievable, provided extension, and it pleased the teacher if the work was finished early.

But English-medium secondary school students were less positive about homework. Only a fifth of the students liked homework, because the work was enjoyable, achievable, or interesting, or they liked doing the set exercises, writing, or finishing work off. The bilingual units at the secondary schools each had one student who mentioned they liked homework because it was enjoyable, achievable, and because homework sometimes filled in time. One bilingual-unit secondary school student liked receiving Maori homework, and 2 students liked homework because they liked learning.

English-medium and bilingual-unit secondary school students disliked homework for a number of reasons, the most common of which was that it took up too much of their time (13 students) when they would rather be doing other things. Other reasons included the homework being too hard (4), not enjoying writing (3), having too much homework (2), having to stay up too late to complete the work (2), and finding the homework boring (1).

There were a couple of English-medium secondary school students who did not like to ask for help with their homework when they needed it. If they could not do it by themselves, they simply would not ask for help. When they got into difficulty with their work during class time, they were also too scared to ask for help from the teacher.

The following interview demonstrates the problem:

> *Who did you ask for help when you needed it?* No one, I didn't do it.
>
> *So a lot of homework or stuff that you were meant to finish for homework just didn't get done.* Mmm.
>
> *You didn't bring it home and ask Mum and Dad for help?* No, too scared.

Why? I don't know, it's just I've always been like that. Too scared to ask for help.

What about your friends, are they like that too? That's why a lot of them have left now.

'Cause they were too scared to ask for help? Yeah and it was just too hard. So they all left, getting jobs.

What about homework for other subjects, did you get any other sort of homework for English? Yeah but not much. And I still wasn't doing it. Even though there wasn't much.

When you decided to do your homework and if you needed help, who did you ask for help? Who helped you, Mum or Dad or both, or your sisters? If I could do it, then I'd do it but if I couldn't then I wouldn't.

So you didn't like asking them at all for help? What about your sisters did you ask them? Na.

Why not? I don't know why.

Did you like homework? No.

Why didn't you like homework? 'Cause it was in my time. It was after school.

Is there anything that you did like about it, about having homework? Well if I thought it was easy then I didn't mind getting down and completing it but if it was too hard I just wouldn't do it. (English-medium secondary school student)

The following example further illustrates the importance of help for students, and shows that students may not understand what is being asked of them in their homework, even if they take action to get clarification from their teacher.

Who helps you with your homework if you need help? My sister. I don't really ask Mum to help me.

What sort of homework does she help you with? Maths and English.

Is she helpful? Yes, really helpful.

How is she helpful? She like reads out the questions 'cause like when I read things I don't quite understand it until I read it a lot of times and she just reads it so I can understand it.

How does she help you with maths, what sorts of things does she do? Sometimes she gives me practice, but then she says it so gives the equations in different forms so I can understand it more and sometimes when I bring her my homework I don't even understand it—she explains it to me.

Why don't you ask the teacher to help, to explain it to you? I do but she still makes it complicated, just confusing. Everyday I always ask her like 3 times how to do it. [She] just says it in long words, just too hard to understand. (English-medium secondary school student)

Support

Although a large number of parents regarded their assistance to their children's learning as helpful, at least half the parents from every group except kura kaupapa Maori wanted to be able to provide other support; additional resources, including time and computer, were most often mentioned. Nine English-medium primary and secondary school parents wanted to be able to provide their child with a computer to assist their learning, and 4 English-medium primary and secondary school parents wanted to provide extra tuition. Both types of support required money which the parents did not have. Three English-medium primary school parents wanted to spend time with their child, but they worked long hours and often found it difficult to even listen to their child read.

Table 26

Type of Support Parents Would Like To Provide

	English-medium		Bilingual-unit		Kura
	Primary School (n = 21)	Secondary School (n = 29)	Primary School (n = 5)	Secondary School (n = 5)	Kaupapa Maori (n = 17)
Monitor homework	2	-	1	-	-
Homework club	-	1	-	-	-
Helping them find answers to their questions	-	1	2	-	-
Extra tuition	2	2	2	-	-
Private school	-	-	1	-	-
Provide best home environment possible	-	-	1	-	-
Routine	1	-	1	-	-
Spend time with child	3	-	1	-	-
Home activities	-	1	1	1	-
Take them to library	-	-	1	-	-
Computer	4	5	-	1	-
Network with business people	-	1	-	-	-
Money for school	2	-	-	-	-
Financial support	-	2	-	-	1
Other experiences	1	-	-	-	-
Don't know what type of support	1	1	-	1	-

Difficulties Parents Had Providing Home Support

Parents were not directly asked whether they had difficulty providing home support for their child's education, but, as they talked about what other support they would like to be able to provide, the difficulties that hindered their ability to provide good home support were revealed.

Communicating With Their Child

Parents of teenage children particularly had difficulty communicating with their children about their day at school, or homework. Most parents tried to start conversations with their child about their day, but the child often gave brief responses.

Parent-child communication has changed since parents were children, and parents had difficulty knowing which communication or parenting style best suited their child's age group. For example, should they be authoritative, and pressure them to do their homework, or allow them more freedom, including allowing them to experience the consequences of their actions?

> Kids nowadays, their personalities, they don't have a problem telling their parents no. I was too scared. I did say no, but I was too scared to say no in a serious manner. I tried to be as encouraging as I can but I think when your kids turn around and say mum I'll do it when I want to, as a parent I think what am I doing. Do I back off or do I stay as I was? I have a concern now, I think I'm going to go back like I was last year, putting pressure on. Even though it might mean a lot of arguments in the house, I've seen what the damage has done this year letting him having his freedom, doing what he wants to do. (English-medium secondary school parent in a school with a bilingual unit)

Communicating With the Teacher

Some parents of secondary school children did not feel that teachers were as available to talk with informally about their children as teachers had been at primary school or intermediate. The structure of the secondary school often made this difficult for parents, who preferred to talk informally with teachers than having to make appointments.

Monitoring Their Child's Homework

Some parents did not know whether their children got homework or not.

> I'm meant to sign [his homework log book]. When I do see it and sign it, most pages are empty, so the only way around it is, 'Have you got homework, have you done your homework?' 'No homework'. 'How come you've got no homework?' 'We don't get homework now.' The only other way is going into their bags but that's violation of their privacy. Times have changed where kids know their rights. It's hard for me because I just have to back off. He has just recently finished an assignment. He did it on Sean Fitzpatrick. He wrote what he

could, he did the questionnaire. As you can see, we've got a computer. Our kids are very lucky because a lot of kids don't have them. He wrote most of it. Because the books are so big too, he says, 'Mum I can't find this', so that's where I come in. I don't know if as a parent I'm doing the right thing by going in and reading it and writing it for him, but to me because he'd done most of it, I didn't mind doing it. I say to him, 'If you get a good mark, tell the teacher I helped you.' Teachers tell you they have homework all the time, what can you do, do you call the teacher a liar or do you call your kid a liar? (English-medium secondary school parent in a school with a bilingual unit)

Hours of employment sometimes limited parents' time available to monitor homework. And, if parents' own education was limited, they often lacked the skills to assist their child when they were having difficulty.

I suppose he's at a disadvantage where I left school end of third form and I starting wagging fourth form, never really went back and my husband left school in third form and so he's disadvantaged that the homework that he's bringing home, I can't help him with. English I can, maths, those sort of things, I can't help, my husband can't help, I don't really want to put it on to the brothers to teach him, so that's one concern. Generally he enjoys school. He likes sports, which I suppose every teenage boy does, about the only concern is as a parent, I can't help him when it comes to homework, which I think is a big disadvantage, even my daughter, some of the work she's bringing home. She's in form 1 and the homework is quite intense. We are not educated parents. I think for all the kids, that will be a disadvantage. (English-medium secondary school parent in a school with a bilingual unit)

I'm on his case about homework. I often think if I had more skills to be able to 'cause I know his concentration span, his reading skills are diabolical and mine are too so I can read but to try and help him. He can read, but if he's understanding what he's reading, that's another question. I doubt very much if he's understanding it. And I would like to have the skills to be able to get him to enjoy reading, just do something after school to help him to get to a stage to enjoy reading. (English-medium secondary school parent in a school with a bilingual unit)

Other Difficulties

Other difficulties mentioned by some parents in helping their children included:

- Lack of Maori-language understanding to know when the child is having difficulty.
- Older siblings helping by doing the work for them.
- Children not wanting to ask the teacher or parent for help because they are scared or shy.
- Finding someone who can help with homework.

- Parents scared to put too much pressure on their teenage children or not wanting to violate their privacy by going into their bags or rummaging through their rooms but knowing that they were not monitoring homework as well as they should be.

Could Teachers Help Parents Better Support Their Child?

Parents who were more confident at supporting their child were more inclined to report that they would ask the teacher for help if they thought it was needed. Parents who lacked a formal education or thought their child was having difficulty thought teachers could help them more to better support their child, particularly at secondary school.

Kura parents were more likely to approach the teacher if they needed help to better support their child than any other group of parents, and English-medium secondary school parents were more inclined than other groups to think that teachers could help them to better support their child. English-medium primary school parents were more likely to think that teachers did enough to help them to support their child.

One parent approached her child's teacher because she thought that her child was not reading at the level she expected, she was concerned that she wasn't helping her child properly with his reading, and was having difficulty finding the time to sit and work with her child on his homework. The teacher suggested that when she sat down to do her study for her course that her son did his at the same time, so her sister also became involved, listening to him read for 15 minutes a day.

Parents' Role Modelling Reading and Writing Activities

Most parents in the study were asked whether their children would see them reading and writing in their homes. Three-quarters of those asked said their children would see them doing both; 14 percent read only, without doing any writing, and 10 percent did neither.

Table 27

Role Model Reading and Writing at Home

	English-medium		Bilingual-unit		Kura
	Primary School (n=21)	Secondary School (n=30)	Primary School (n=6)	Secondary School (n=6)	Kaupapa Maori (n=18)
Reading only	3	2	1	1	3
Writing only	-	1	-	-	-
Both	12	20	2	5	12
Neither	1	4	2	-	-
Not covered	5	3	1	-	3

After-school Activities

Students were asked about their activities out of school. As with most students, physical activity and television featured prominently. Playing sport (26 students), participating in sports (19), watching television (18), and pursuing water sports (10) were the most popular

after-school activities for children. The next most popular group of activities each chosen by 5 students were reading, writing, and going to the library. Other after-school activities included:

- listening to music, doing puzzles, kapahaka, community centre (3 students each);
- playstation, drawing, homework, dancing (2 students each);
- talking to friends, paid work, clubs such as keas or brownies, cooking, working on cars, gymnastics, working out at the gymnasium, visiting the museum, and going on walks (1 student each).

Teachers' and Principals' Perspectives of Home Support

Maori and Pakeha, primary and secondary, English-medium and bilingual-unit teachers and their principals generally agreed that parents should provide home support in the following forms.

Homework

- Monitor and assist with homework, and sign a homework book if there is one.
- Ensure their children maintain a homework routine.
- Encourage their children to read.
- Show an interest in homework when children share it with them.
- Get help for the child from teachers, friends, or family when needed.
- Provide quiet, well-lit space for doing homework.

Resources

- Provide financial support for school trips, books, or school stationery.
- Ensure child has the right equipment for school.

Home Environment

- Provide an environment where children are loved and cared for, a stable, secure, structured, organised, consistent, and supportive home environment.
- Provide quality parental time with their child.

School Preparation

- Ensure that the child is clean, well fed, and has enough sleep.
- Set boundaries on acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and enforce them.
- Get the child to school on time.
- Ensure the child attends school regularly.

Classroom Programme

- Support the classroom programme by asking their child about their work at school and actively take an interest.

Parent-child Communication

- Talk about what has been happening at school each day, current events, and what is happening in the community.

Home-school Communications

- Keep contact with the teacher through the homework book or by any other method with any concerns.
- Turn up to parent-teacher interviews.
- Demonstrate the same expectation of the child as the teacher, so that they can both work toward the same goals to assist the child.
- Acknowledge any notes sent home by the teacher.

Value Education

- Value education, and ensure the child gets that message by saying supportive things about school and education throughout their lives.

Maori Language

- Encourage the child to read in Maori, and read to them or with them.
- A Maori speaker in the house to help with Maori language and tikanga.

Bilingual-unit, kura kaupapa Maori, and Maori-language teachers hoped that the Maori language would be supported at home even although many knew that was not happening and not likely to happen.

Primary School

English-medium primary school teachers agreed that homework should be work that children should not have any difficulty with. However, should a child have difficulty, then teachers expected parents to be able to help the child work through any difficulties and not simply monitor homework.

> They [Maori parents] should be reading to their children each night, they should be helping them with their homework and they should be providing the necessary resources if they possibly can. I know sometimes that may be a bit hard for some parents who haven't got computers or haven't got access to a lot of books and things. (English-medium primary school teacher in a school with a bilingual unit)

> There's a core of parents who do this [ask how they can help with their children] and usually it's just a few, most are quite happy to let me or any teacher just carry on as long as the reading is coming home at night time and they can see that some things [are] happening and they don't seem to worry all that much. (English-medium primary school teacher in a school with a bilingual unit)

One English-medium primary school principal believed it was important to send home achievable homework to share with parents and that schools had to be careful not unwittingly to put pressure on working parents' limited time. She believed some parents who wanted their children to achieve did not understand the role they must play for that to happen.

Another English-medium primary school principal had a community homework centre available to his school, and found that resulted in more homework being completed, and in children requesting homework because they could not attend the centre without it, and they enjoyed the centre.

> So actually, as I say more homework is being done, this year than any other year than there ever has been, also more home reading is being completed, which is having really positive effects and spin offs in our reading programmes. (English-medium primary school principal)

The principal believed there were 3 reasons for its success: the "low-key" nature of the centre; other activities provided such as 2 computers and spacies games for early finishers; and afternoon tea. Teachers were unsure if parents were actually seeing the homework done by the children, because the homework books were being signed by the homework centre volunteers and not the parents. They felt it was important that parents see the homework because it gave the parents an indication of the child's progress and it allowed work to be shared with the parent.

One of the 2 bilingual-unit primary school teachers expressed some ambivalence about homework.

> I'm not a big believer in homework and that's just from my grandfather not allowing my mother to go to school and when they were given homework he told the teachers they won't do it because you have them 5 hours a day and they don't need to do homework for another 3 hours of their day, so I think I've got that in the back of the mind, maybe it's something personally as a teacher I need to get rid of because I think that's most probably gonna help the children read and write and anything else. (Bilingual-unit primary school teacher)

But she puts a lot of emphasis on face-to-face informal communication with the parents.

Both bilingual-unit primary school principals put tips for parent in the school newsletters. One principal did so after observing parents trying to help their children in the

wrong way. The tips included advice on how to help with homework and reading, and reminders to see that children get enough sleep, dress appropriately for the weather, and are fed properly. This principal explains the ideal home-school relationship she would like at her school:

> What we most want from parents is that they be parents. We don't actually want people rushing down here to tell us how to teach kids. What we want them to do is be looking after children being good parents and I'd say that's loving and consistent preferably in a 2-parent relationship because that's even more ideal for children but I don't have a value judgment on that particularly, I just think that children function better if their parents happen to love each other and live in the house together and there's a male and female role model. Seeing that they get enough sleep, all the creature comforts and physical things are looked after, that there are boundaries set, their self-esteem isn't damaged and dented too much that people talk up the school. If you are going to sort of blackguard teachers at home and say 'Oh that school's useless and hopeless and rotten' then in fact all you do is set up a dreadful dilemma of divided loyalty and that to me is not being supportive of the school and [where parents] race around here you know rapidly demanding that we teach electronics. I think that is what you want them to do is be good parents that's the best way they could support their kids I think at school. If they did their job, we do our job and have a sort of happy marriage between those we'd be fine. (Bilingual-unit primary school principal)

Secondary School

Principals' Views

At the beginning of the year the secondary school principals sent out information about the school and guidelines on how parents could help their children with homework. Newsletters were also used to inform parents of ways in which they could help, such as the importance of providing a quiet, well-lit homework space. Two principals emphasised the need to explain regularly that the education of their child was a partnership between the school, the parent, and the child. They felt that often parents thought that only the school had the responsibility for education, and only within school hours. Newsletters and meetings were used by all principals to set out study programmes.

At one bilingual-unit secondary school the principal believed he dealt with Maori children more than any other group for not doing their homework. Sometimes Maori parents felt that the school's expectations of homework were too high.

Maori Teachers

One Maori teacher was running a homework group once a week at the marae for Maori students at a secondary school. He was hoping that more teachers would attend. The students brought money to buy fish and chips. The homework centre was perceived by

some Pakeha and Maori as Maori children receiving extra help and therefore they did not support it, regarding it as non-egalitarian.

Being on the same "waka" is how 2 Maori teachers, one secondary and one primary, described the importance of parents and teachers sharing the same expectations. Being aware of what was happening at school and what was expected helped minimise any opportunities the child had to get away with not doing their school work.

> I think that the teachers and the parents need to have the same expectations of their children or students. We've got to be on the same wavelength and the same waka. It doesn't matter if we're out of time as long as we're in the same waka and going in the same direction because I think that our kids they need direction and they need structure and a lot of them haven't got it in their everyday life and sometimes the only structure that they get is at school and if you do the same things on a regular pattern kids seem to fall into this pattern and this is sort of my own philosophy I suppose, but I think that the parents and the teachers need to get together and have the same expectations and set the same goals so you can back each other up. I mean that would be the ideal situation I suppose. (Bilingual-unit secondary school teacher)

> For our kids I think it's just seeing that their parents turn up and knowing that their parents know what's going on at school and like for a couple of kids in my class if their parents know they get homework and they are going to get homework today they will go home and do it. Whereas for another couple of kids if their parents aren't totally aware of what day they get their homework then the kids won't make any effort to do it. So if the parents and I are basically on the same waka, if we're paddling the same waka then the kids know where they are at. It's the inconsistency where the kids sort of fall off a little bit. (Bilingual-primary school teacher)

Although Maori and Pakeha secondary school teachers have similar expectations of Maori parental home support such as supportive home environment, showing an interest in the child's work, and assisting with their homework, there were some differences in the approach. Pakeha secondary school teachers did not often attempt to meet the parents in more informal situations, so providing an opportunity for them to experience a different side to the teacher in situations where Maori parents feel more comfortable. Teachers showing that they care about the community and are willing to make an extra effort is important to Maori parents.

Maori secondary school teachers will make themselves more available to parents through community activities, and giving children and parents home phone numbers to ring if they need help. They also understand that they must earn the trust and respect of the community through their work and activities. If they give commitment and respect, then Maori parents are more inclined to reciprocate.

> Very good [response to new teacher]. Might be because I am out in the community and see a lot of extra activities, not only as a person from the school but I deal with other sports and coach other students and the parents have met me. They know me so they tend to be very receptive. I serve in the community as well. It makes a lot of difference eh? And also if they have problems with their kids they ring me, to see if I can do something about it, so yes, it's a two-way thing that I have with the community. (English-medium Maori secondary school teacher)

> Pretty positive. I think maybe I'm at an advantage being here because I know the community and I know a lot of the people really well. Some of these kids here are my friends' sons and daughters or people I've known over the years so when they find out it's me, you know like if you live in a community like this, I find it's hard for outsiders to come in because they've really done nothing. People around here you have to have done something for the community before you're worth anything you know something like that or you've lived in it and felt what it's like, so for me it's no problem, I know the area and I know how people think around here too. (English-medium Maori secondary school teacher)

Secondary school teachers and principals thought that children probably did not have the space at home to work quietly. They also believed that Pakeha parents were more inclined to get on the phone than Maori parents to challenge the school on issues and to demand more of the school.

Kura Kaupapa Maori

Te Aho Matua guides both kura kaupapa Maori in their relationship with the home with regard to home support. The learning and activities at school should be supported at home, and vice versa, the learning and activities of the home should be supported at school. Therefore if children are reading at kura then they should also be reading at home; if the child's family is attending a hui, tangihanga, or playing sports, then those are activities that should be supported at the kura.

> Whai noa iho i Te Aho Matua. Mēnā kei te kī Te Aho Matua me rite te kāinga ki te kura, me rite te kura ki te kāinga, nā te tikanga, ko ngā mahi kei te mahia i te kura, kei te mahia hoki i te kāinga. Ana ko ngā mahi o te kāinga kei te mahia i konei i te kura. Nā reira, mehemea kei te pānui pukapuka ngā tamariki i konei, ko tērā te haepapa o te whānau, kia haere tonu tērā mahi i te kāinga hoki. Mehemea kei te hī ika, kei te mahi mara kai aha rānei i te kāinga, te tikanga kei te mahia hoki tērā i te kura. Nā reira kei te ōrite te tikanga, te kāinga me te kura. Me te mea hoki kei te kīmātou ko ngā mahi katoa o te kāinga, he akoranga kei reira. Nā reira, kei te tautokongia e mātou ngā mahi katoa o tēnā whānau o tēnā whānau. Mehemea kei te haere te whānau ki tētahi hui, ki tētahi tangihanga, ki te tākaro hākinakina, kei te whakaarohia e mātou he mahi o te kura hoki ērā. Kei

reira ngā akoranga, kei reira ngā huarahi, kia tutuki ai te marautanga o te motu. Nā reira kia mahi tahi o te kāinga me te kura. (Kura whānau)

Within this philosophy is the understanding that teachers are not the only sources of knowledge. Teachers are constantly finding ways of showing both whanau members and children that parents are knowledgeable and skilled. One teacher recalls the positive influence of "talking the parents up".

> 'Ehara i te mea mātau ake au i ō mātua, kia mōhio mai tamariki he tino nui te mātauranga kei te kāinga. Ehara kei te kura anake, kei te pukapuka rānei kia tirohia ērā.' Nā te mea, nā reira kei te pai he rawe te rongo kei te kite i ēnei āhuatanga, kei te kite ngā tamariki o tēnei kura he pūkenga a ō rātou mātua. He rawe tēnā nā te mea, me kōrero au, ko tēnei wiki i tono ahau ki tētahi o ngā whaea matatau ki te raranga, nā runga i ngā kōrero, a tātou kōrero o te kura e pa ana ki te wharekura, me ōna tikanga me ōna rawe me ōna papai katoa i noho whakahihi tana tamaiti. I tae mai tōna māmā. I kite ahau i tāna, 'Tōku māmā tēnā, matatau ia, he tohunga tōku māmā.' He rawe tērā, he rawe rawa atu tērā he hua anō tērā ki au kia kite i te kiritau o te tamaiti ki tōna māmā, me te mōhiotanga o te māmā ki ōna ake mahi. Ae. Ko au tētahi ka kī atu i te mutunga ko mātou katoa he pouako. I te mutunga, ki ngā tamariki kei ō koutou mātua te mana whakahaere te kura nei. Kei a rātou ngā mōhiotanga. (Kura kaupapa Māori teacher)

Kura teachers are understanding of the difficulties parents may have in ensuring homework is completed when there are other whanau or cultural activities such as tangihanga. They also make themselves available or contactable outside the kura if parents or children need help with their homework. Many parents in the 2 kura kaupapa Maori spoke Maori and therefore did not find that a barrier to helping their children with their homework. Kura teachers also felt that if a child was having difficulty, it could be due to their explanation of the homework and that they needed to reflect on that and improve.

Teachers at both kura have received requests from both parents and children for homework, although at one kura some parents have also said that they do not want homework because they do not find time for it.

Negative Home Support

Principals and teachers identified a number of parental actions that they considered to be negative home support.

- When the parent took the side of the child against the school rather than perceiving the relationship as a partnership.
- When parents took their children out of school for a period of time for activities such as babysitting, birthdays, or tangihanga (the latter was not an action given by kura kaupapa Maori).
- When parents allowed children to stay away from school and made excuses for them.

- Dysfunctional home life.
- Parents not ensuring that their children get to school often enough.
- Parents talking negatively about either school or education in general.
- A child being treated as a "smart arse" and needing to be "taken down a peg or two".

Summary

Kura kaupapa Maori parents and teachers perceived the role of the school differently from English-medium and bilingual-unit parents. The education of their child has not the sole responsibility of the school. They understood that they had to continue their child's learning at home. On the other hand, while English-medium and bilingual-unit principals would have liked parents and children to operate in partnership with the school, many parents believed that it was the schools' responsibility to teach their child and their role was to support as best they could. Many parents, particularly at secondary school, felt they were limited in how they could help support their child. This probably reflected their own mixed, or negative, memories of secondary education.

About half of the English-medium secondary school students appeared to perceive learning as something that happened at school between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Any school work expected of them beyond those hours cut into their own personal time for sports or other recreation. Some of those students who did not like to ask questions of their teachers at school, continued this in the home by not asking for help when they needed it, and for many students who struggled in the classroom homework was also a struggle. These students required scaffolding in their homework from others to help them understand what the question was or what was required of them in their homework. Once they received this assistance in a way that they understood, the work became achievable.

Indeed, where teachers reached out into the community, showing their respect for the relationships and activities which mattered for Maori parents and their children, the partnership which school principals and teachers valued appeared more readily achieved. Kura kaupapa Maori are anchored in the community they make with their parents—a community in which the kura may indeed provide the anchor, in which it is distinct, but not separated. In other schools, the work of building a joint community is harder, and rests more on individual teachers' efforts. Maori teachers and principals find it easier to create such communities, although this study has examples of Pakeha teachers and principals using their out-of-school interests and relationships to build additional links with Maori families, links which help make a relationship between school and home closer.

Pakeha teachers and principals emphasised the need for parents to "talk up" the school to their children, or while talking about the school in front of their children. On the other hand, kura kaupapa Maori teachers, and Maori teachers in other schools to a lesser extent, know the importance of "talking up" the parents to the children, so that the children do not think that the teachers are more skilled or more valued than their parents but that the relationship is an equal one.

CONCLUSION

❒ Valuing Education

In the past, assumptions have been made that those parents who are less involved than others in their child's school or classroom are not as supportive of the school or their child's teacher, and care less about their child's education. All parents spoken to for this study valued education, and took an active interest in, and had concerns about, their child's education.

The teachers and principals interviewed believed that Maori parents cared about their child's education. Teachers concluded that if Maori parents were not as involved as they would have liked them to be, it was because some parents had other more important matters that needed attention before their child's education, such as stretching low incomes, employment, housing, or health-related concerns.

❒ Home Support

Sometimes teachers judged a parent's home support based on their knowledge of the parent and the type and extent of the contact they had with them at school. Parents who were active in the school—with sport, fundraising, whanau meetings, or boards of trustees—were thought to provide good home support. This perception was not always accurate. Some highly involved parents who were considered to be providing good home support spoke about their difficulties in trying to get their child to do homework, or helping with homework if needed, and providing guidance to their child.

❒ Respecting Each Other

Some common values were shared among parents across all school types. Parents wanted themselves and their children to be treated respectfully by teachers and principals. If they were shown respect and knew that teachers cared for them and their child they were inclined to reciprocate respect by the child working for the teacher and the parent supporting the teacher.

Maori teachers were aware of the importance of this relationship for both Maori parents and their children. But it was the kura kaupapa Maori teachers who were perhaps the most successful at creating this relationship because it was encouraged by all teachers and whanau of the kura. The two kura in this study had fewer behavioural problems and misunderstandings with their children than both English-medium and bilingual-unit schools. Pakeha teachers and principals acknowledged that informal meetings with Maori parents were the most successful for communication, yet few actively encouraged or sought situations which would allow the informality to happen. Such initiatives often meant sacrificing their own time or participating in activities that might have been slightly out of their comfort zones.

❒ Encouraging Maori

Nevertheless teachers and principals were making genuine efforts to improve Maori students' learning by implementing various learning programmes, not necessarily specifically designed for Maori children. The incorporation of Maori content and the establishment of bilingual units were some of the attempts teachers and schools made to help cater more for Maori students.

❒ Bilingual Units

The tensions for Maori of living in a mainly English, monolingual country were most evident for those parents who had chosen bilingual units. English fluency was their yardstick for judging their children's progress, yet they did not want their children to be without te reo Maori and Maori values. Their expectations that bilingual units would allow their children to develop equal fluency in both Maori and English were often misplaced.

Lack of skilled teachers made it difficult to maintain bilingual units, as did roll fluctuations when parents changed their minds for what was seen sometimes to be the safer option of English-medium education. Bilingual units could also be a source of tension among school staff. Further investigation of bilingual units is needed, to find what makes them viable, and allows them to provide good education and support for Maori students.

❒ Communications and Relationships

Students valued teachers who showed they respected and cared deeply about them. Parents liked teachers who were friendly, who interacted with them on an informal level, and who showed a real interest in their child both academically and personally. The values of respect, caring, and reciprocity seem more typical of small communities.

Such relationships may be harder to develop in urban settings, but both parents and teachers need to find effective ways of communicating. Parents respond to teachers who make themselves available when parents come into schools, who approach the parent in the playground and say something positive about their child, make a phone call to the parent, send a note or letter, acknowledge parents when they see them in the community, attend sports events parents are likely to attend, and occasionally visit the home of parents for good news as well as disappointing news.

The need to develop such relationships raises questions about whether the way secondary schools are structured could be approached differently. Economies of scale may favour larger schools, but may work against the personal support which Maori students respond well to. If we are going to close the gaps for Maori students, we need to ensure that schools work in ways which encourage them and provide them with sufficient positive attention.

Respect and trust need to be evident to Maori students, who are extremely sensitive to any behaviour that singles them out and which associates failure with being Maori.

Parents were most highly involved in kura kaupapa Maori, followed by bilingual units. As the expectation of involvement increases, so to does the communication flow between the kura and the home, the sense of support—both ways, and frequently the actual

involvement of parents. Schools which accept the responsibility to encourage parents to become involved using good, clear, and genuine communications are more likely to have parents become involved with school activities, and communicating more with the school themselves.

❒ Parental Responsibility

Kura kaupapa Maori parents and teachers perceive the role of the school differently from English-medium and bilingual-unit parents. They understand that their child's education is not the sole responsibility of the school; they must continue their child's learning at home. On the other hand, while English-medium and bilingual-unit principals would like parents and children to operate in partnership with the school, many Maori parents believe that it is the school's responsibility to teach their child and their role is to support as best they can. Many parents, particularly at secondary school, feel they are limited in how they can help support their child; this attitude probably reflects their own mixed, or negative, memories of secondary education. Parents need both more guidance on how best to help their child at home or how to access information or services to assist them with that support, and better communication between home and school.

❒ Students' Attitudes

English-medium secondary school students need to change their attitude about doing school work outside the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Some of those students who do not like to ask questions of their teachers at school continue this in the home by not asking for help when they need it, and for many students who struggle in the classroom homework is also a struggle. These students require scaffolding in their homework from others to help them understand what the question is or what is required of them in their homework. Once they receive this assistance in a way that they understand, the work becomes achievable.

❒ The School in the Community

Where teachers reach out into the community, showing their respect for the relationships and activities which matter for Maori parents and their children, the partnership which school principals and teachers value appears more readily achieved. Kura kaupapa Maori are anchored in the community they make with their parents—a community in which the kura may indeed provide the anchor, in which it is distinct, but not separated. In other schools, the work of building a joint community is harder, and rests more on individual teachers' efforts. Maori teachers and principals find it easier to create such communities, although this study has examples of Pakeha teachers and principals using their out-of-school interests and relationships to build additional links with Maori families, links which help make a relationship between school and home closer, and thus encourage and support Maori students' achievement and sense of purpose.

GLOSSARY

arotake	evaluation
haere mai	welcome
hāngi	earth oven, food from earth oven
hīkoitanga	walk through the stages, progression
hui	gathering, usually on a marae, conducted according to Maori protocol
kai	food
kaiako	teacher
kaiārahi reo	leader (of group, class) in Maori language
kapahaka	Maori culture group
kaumātua	respected tribal elder
kawa	ritual, protocol
kōhanga reo	literally "language nest"; a preschool education centre using the Maori language and run according to Maori kaupapa and tikanga
koroua	old man
kuia	older respected woman
kura kaupapa	total-immersion, Maori-language primary school
mahi	work, job, employment
mātapuna	resources
me	and
nau mai	welcome
ngā tikanga	customs, protocol
noho marae	marae stay, visit
ohu	working bee
papakāinga	traditional settlement, but in this context means homegroup
pōrangi	beside oneself, out of one's mind, mad
pōwhiri	welcome ceremony
rewena (bread)	leavened (bread)
taha Māori	mainstream Maori enrichment programme
tangihanga	funeral wake
te aho matua	kura kaupapa Maori philosophy
te ao Māori	the Maori world
te ao Pākehā	the Pakeha world
te iho kōhine	name of programme to build self-esteem among Maori girls
tēina	younger child
tēna kōwhiria	Dare [programme] in Maori
te reo Māori	the Maori language
tē rongomau	broadcast or spread good news
te whānau tahi	one family
tino rangatiratanga	sovereignty, self-determination

toto Māori	Maori blood
tuakana	older child
tūpuna	ancestors
tū tangata	self-reliance
tutū	impudent, insubordinate, a nuisance
wairua	spirituality, spiritual development
waka ama	outrigger canoe
wānanga	seminar, course
whaikōrero	formal speech
whakahaere	administration
whakatūwheratanga	openings of kura (schools) or wharenui (meeting houses)
whānau	family
wharekura	secondary division of kura kaupapa Maori
wharenui	big/main house, meeting house
whare whenua	buildings, property

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